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**Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion**

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Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 12:16 AM

[★](#) **Sati devi dasi**

<sati.bts@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Suresvara Dasa <suresvara@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratudas <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,

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damodara.bvks@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com

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Dear SABHA members and guests,  
please accept my humble obeisance  
All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

Our Chairman, Nrsimhananda prabhu, who has initiated the discussion of the topic of Vaishnavi Diksha Gurus, decided to move the conversation from SABHA Forum to the email format as he would like to invite to this conversation Vaishnavas who are not SABHA members, namely Krishna Kirti prabhu and Damodara prabhu. These devotees are designated spokespersons for the issue, as well as widely recognized scholars. We would like to welcome them here.

To send a message to this email string, please do not forget to use "Reply to All" button. Thank you!

with love,  
ys Sati dd

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Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 12:55 PM



**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: sati.bts@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com

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Prabhus,

Excuse me in Krishna Kirti or Damodara Prabhus have addressed my points below, but I haven't yet seen anything from them on this topic.

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Secondly, I would be interested in understanding why, when Prabhupada's requested all his disciples, both son's and daughters, to take their own disciples, some have concluded he didn't intend it to have women initiate. If that was not his intention, why did he several times mention women? If the argument is because he hadn't yet decided to establish varnasrama, and women gurus undermine the varnasrama culture we wish to create, can anyone offer a direct quote in which Prabhupada explicitly states this.

I am asking this because I haven't seen such direct references and am interested in knowing if they do exist. I have read various arguments against female diksa gurus, along with what the proponents consider sastric evidence, but I have yet to see any direct statements from Prabhupada that explicitly support those conclusions. If I am to conclude that women are not meant to initiate, or not meant to initiate until they are liberated, such direct statements would be important for me.

Thank you.

Your servant,  
Mahatma das

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Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 12:56 PM



**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: sati.bts@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com

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Thank you.

Your servant,  
Mahatma das

dard Time, [sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com) writes:

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Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 1:06 PM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>,

Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi

devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,

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FYI to all; sent just now:

Dear Visakha dd,  
PAMHO AGTSP

The SABHA is entering into an email conference discussing the VDG issue. Participants include the 28 members of the SABHA, Krishna Kirti pr., Damodara pr (both representing the view that it is not SP's desire or teachings). One of the members requested that you represent the pro-VDG position. This email conference is beginning immediately. Will you accept the invitation?

I hope you are well and blissful in KC.

YS, Nrsimhananda das

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Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 3:00 PM

 **Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

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<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

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<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das



<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
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devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
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Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances,

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

I beg apology if there is some lacking on my part. It is inevitable that in sastric discussions there may be strong obstinate arguments from both sides while presenting points from guru-sadhu-sastra. Thus, please don't take any offense from me. I will try to be as polite as possible. Please find my reply below.

Thankyou,

Your servant,

damodara das

First I will reply one point only in order to keep discussion more focussed. More replies to come later.

>> ...any direct quotes in which Srila Prabhupada said that his female disciples should not initiate disciples?

What about—

**Sunīti, was his** patha-pradarśaka-guru. Patha-pradarśaka-guru means "the guru, or the spiritual master, who shows the way." Such a guru is sometimes called **śikṣā-guru**.

**Sunīti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Mahārāja's dīkṣā-guru. (SB 4.12.32, purport)**

Srila Prabhupada says that, directly. How do you understand this.

*If you ask for direct quotes, then what can be a more direct quote than the one from his books—*

Remember, Srila Prabhupada has repeatedly said if you want to understand him, read his books. Thus books are the basis and reveal, relatively more, the heart of Srila Prabhupada than the conversations and lectures where he spoke seeing the audience he is speaking to (see quotes at end of this paragraph). SP says – "If we say all these things, they will cut my head. [laughs] Therefore I don't say in the public meeting all these things." (RC Jun 18, 1976) It doesn't mean that conversations, letters, etc are not authoritative, they are; but Srila Prabhupada has revealed his heart in his books and thus if there is contradiction between his statements from books and other sources of his vani, books should be given preference.

In discussing with His Divine Grace I summarized your desire to have access to all of the many tapes which Golden Avatar has for the purpose of transcribing them into rough manuscript form to be published later on as cross references or in some other form. His Divine Grace was not very enthusiastic at all about this idea. Srila Prabhupada commented, "This is not necessary. My books are sufficient. Let all of my disciples read my books. This idea is over-burden. It will mean to many readings. Let them read whatever is there and digest it. Everything I have wanted to say I have said in my books. This will only be superfluous. Tell him to concentrate on reading my books, not on studying such transcriptions. Does he think he will find something else in these transcriptions that are not in my books?"

>> Letter from Tamal Krishna (on behalf of SP), Vrindavana, Jul 20, 1977

"Whatever I have wanted to say," he explained, "I have said in my books. If I live, I will say something little more. If you want to know me, read my books."

>> SPL 52 & TKGs Diary, 9 Jun 1977

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Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 4:41 PM



**Carl Woodham**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Suresvara Dasa <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratudas <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com

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Dear SABHA Member,

PAMHO. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Here is some background on this topic and the reason why it has suddenly come to SABHA. This is a timeline of the GBC's deliberations on Vaishnavi diksa gurus and where the matter stands now.

2002: Following all the ISKCON requirements, a Vaishnavi is nominated to give diksa by a local committee but receives three objections on the GBC email conference, forcing the nomination to the full GBC body.

2003: The GBC asks the Sastric Advisory Committee (SAC) to write a paper about the general subject of

women diksa gurus in our sampradaya.

2005: The SAC paper finds both scriptural and historic basis for women giving initiation in ISKCON. The GBC accepts the SAC paper with deferred implementation.

2009: The GBC authorizes both male and female devotees to go through local area committees to get approval to initiate.

2010: The same Vaishnavi locally nominated eight years earlier requests and is promised the opportunity to take the next step in the ISKCON procedure, which is to personally discuss the questioned nomination with the GBC body. However, she is not allowed to do so and the GBC subsequently disapproves her nomination, without explanation, in a closed confidential session.

2011: A second Vaishnavi is nominated by a local committee but receives 3 objections on the GBC email conference.

2013: The GBC body abandons the stated procedure (discussing disputed nominations) and commissions a new paper on women gurus by the SAC. The paper, still recommending Vaishnavi diksa gurus, is not published or discussed at the 2014 GBC meeting.

2014: At the Mayapur AGM, the topic is assigned to a committee of "devotees who have no pre-determined view on the topic" who are commissioned to gather and sort all relevant documents, and to do their own further research and present all this to the GBC. At the mid-term GBC meeting, there are three days of discussion. However, the GBC fails to reach a conclusion.

2015: The GBC announces an intention to research how siksa and diksa gurus will work in ISKCON. Pending this research, an indefinite moratorium is put in place disallowing women to initiate. In the resolution no one is assigned to do this research and no time frame is given. Instead, in a very unusual decision, the GBC says it as a body will review the moratorium annually.

2016: The North American temple presidents present the GBC with a survey showing strong support for Vaishnavi diksa gurus in ISKCON, along with a resolution calling for revocation of the moratorium.

2016: At their annual general meeting, the GBC does not discuss the North American leader's proposal.

2016: After their annual meeting, the GBC does not mention in their minutes any review of the moratorium against Vaishnavi diksa gurus.

2018: The GBC assigns the topic to a new committee comprised of devotees strongly in favor and strongly opposed to VDGs in ISKCON. They meet in May of 2018 and produce a confidential recommendation to the GBC.

2018: The recommendation leaks out. It says that the committee recommends that the GBC allow women to give first initiations in ISKCON.

2018: Those opposed to Vaishnavis initiating in ISKCON begin lobbying everyone they can, including SABHA, to get the GBC to deny the committee's recommendation.

On December 22, 2018, without any prior notice to or consultation of the members, the SABHA chairman posts for discussion on the SABHA conference a draft resolution opposing Vaishnavi Diksa Gurus from an unnamed source. Several SABHA members give detailed refutations of the draft proposal, and none give any arguments for supporting it. The discussion is then shifted to e-mail to allow VDG opponents, junior devotees unknown to most SABHA members, to argue their case. Later, an invitation is issued to a VDG advocate, a senior and well-known Prabhupada disciple, to join the discussion. Her reply is pending. Meanwhile, VDG opponents are making their case to SABHA on the new e-mail forum.

This is what is now actually happening: devotees who oppose Vaishnavis initiating in ISKCON are trying hard to get SABHA to ask the GBC to overrule its own committee's conclusion.

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Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 5:02 PM



**Carl Woodham**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

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<brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Dear Damodara Prabhu,

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I agree that strong feelings can arise in discussions like this, and I appreciate and concur with your gentlemanly approach. If I offend you in this discussion, please forgive me. I also appreciate you keeping the discussion concise and focused as opposed to the argumentum ad nauseum used by people who have no real case.

You argue that a single line from Srila Prabhupada's books should be extrapolated to apply to all of ISKCON, regardless of contravening statements from Srila Prabhupada elsewhere.

Srila Prabhupada's books are weightier than letters or lectures, yet because in the case you cite, his purports relate to ancient events being described in the text. For ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada often gives direct instructions that superficially contradict statements in his books. For instance, in the Nectar of Devotion he writes:

One should begin the worship of the demigod Ganapati, who drives away all impediments in the execution of devotional service. In the Brahma Samhita it is stated that Ganapati worships the lotus feet of Lord Nrsimhadeva and in that way has become auspicious for the devotees in clearing out all impediments. Therefore, all devotees should worship Gaëapati.

This sounds like a straightforward, clear and all-encompassing instruction. Should we take it as a foundational injunction for the whole of ISKCON for the next ten thousand years? Should we promote installing Ganesa murtis in every temple? No, because Srila Prabhupada wrote specific letters telling his followers not to do so.

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Your servant,  
Kalakantha das ACBSP

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Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 5:20 PM



**[Carl Woodham](#)**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Damodara Prabhu, Hare Krishna. Here is my response to your paper posted by Nrsimhananda Prabhu on the SABHA forum. Kindly address the objections raised.

Your servant,  
Kalakantha das ACBSP

Dear Sabha Colleague,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Recently a paper was posted to this conference claiming definitive proof from the Bharadvaja Samhita section of the Narada Pancaratra that women should not initiate unless they're siddhas, perfected devotees. We certainly agree that anyone who becomes a perfected devotee may give diksa, regardless of their birth. However, the authors attempt to foist on the reader additional, extraneous conclusions that do not appear in the text they cite.

The paper refers to these seven verses:

||38||

“Thus, one who is desirous of surrendering with faith should take shelter of a guru who is always engaged in chanting the mantra and is a knower of bhakti-siddhānta, is always engaged, without any desire for personal benefit, in showering mercy on fallen souls, who is always pure in heart or free of sins, peaceful, and always committed to his prescribed duties. Such a guru should be the best of the twice-born.

||39||

“The best guru of all is a learned brāhmaṇa endowed with good qualities who has taken birth in a sinless lineage of devotee ancestors, traceable up to seven generations.”

||40||

“Even if a twice-born brāhmaṇa happens to have some non-devotees in his family line, or has not been fortunate to take birth in a renowned family of devotees, he nevertheless always deserves to be an ācārya if he is endowed with all good qualities like knowledge and renunciation, is engaged in his prescribed duties, and is steeped in loving devotion to the Lord.”

||41||

“On the other hand, one cannot become an ācārya even if one is born in a great family line but is devoid of jñāna, bhakti,

good qualities, etc. Also, unless there is an emergency, an ācārya from a lower birth or age should not initiate a person from a higher birth or age.”

||42||

“Even then, a woman, a śūdra and an antyaja (one born less than a sudra) can never act as an initiating guru, nor can anyone who is accused of a great sin or is fallen. And an aspiring disciple who is already accomplished in detachment should never accept a guru who is infected with material desires.”

||43||

“Women, śūdras, etc., can give ethical and moral instructions and are also worthy of respect as per their qualifications and conditions but are not entitled to get the position of ācārya.”

||44||

“But, because perfect yogis who are on the stage of yoga-pratyakṣa (i.e. are self-realized – seeing God face-to-face), may take birth in any family tradition, in such cases no consideration of kula, gender, etc. as mentioned earlier apply.”

These verses make no distinction whatsoever between the spiritual opportunities available to women and to those born sudras or less. Yet the authors (in their Executive Summary) somehow extract the following conclusions:

- Bharadvaja Samhita gives criteria by which both sādhakas and siddhas can be judged eligible to become dīkṣā-guru.
- Sādhakas who are men of brāhmaṇa-, kṣatriya-, or vaiśya-varṇa (by quality) can become dīkṣā-guru.
- Sādhakas who are women, śūdras or antyajās (lower than śūdras) are forbidden to act as dīkṣā-guru.
- Śūdras or antyajās get the body of a brāhmaṇa if properly initiated

and can also become dīkṣā-guru. But gender does not change with dīkṣā.

## - Bharadvaja Samhita still restricts women who are sādhakas from initiating.

None of these statements from the "Executive Summary" can be found in the verses. Of the practice employed here by the authors, Srila Prabhupada writes (SB 1.1.4): "Personal realization does not mean that one should, out of vanity, attempt to show one's own learning by trying to surpass the previous ācārya....The original purpose of the text must be maintained. No obscure meaning should be screwed out of it..."

The original meaning of these beautiful verses is clear and important: everyone can become a pure devotee. These verses are a cornerstone of Srila Prabhupada's mission to make pure Krishna conscious devotees all over the world, even among those judged unqualified by body conscious *kali-yuga* brahmanas.

The authors go on to distinguish between their injected term 'sadhaka' and *siddhas*, perfected devotees. Here is Srila Prabhupada's comment to those making this distinction between siddhas and asiddhas in ISKCON:

**"All of my disciples are pure devotees.** Anyone sincerely serving the spiritual master is a pure devotee, it may be Siddhasvarupa or others, a-Siddhasvarupa. **This must be very clearly stated.** It is not only that your Siddhasvarupa is a pure devotee and not others. **Do not try to make a faction.** Siddhasvarupa is a good soul. But others should not be misled. **Anyone who is surrendered to the spiritual master is a pure devotee,** it doesn't matter if Siddhasvarupa or non-Siddhasvarupa. Amongst ourselves one should respect others as Prabhu, master, one another. **As soon as we distinguish here is a pure devotee, here is a non-pure devotee, that means I am a nonsense."** (SPL, Ahmedabad, Dec. 14, 1972). (*Emphasis mine*).

After its concocted 'Executive Summary,' the paper then lists the seven verses out of order, trying to shift emphasis from the clear and conclusive final verse. The whole paper appears to be a contrived attempt to misrepresent the original verses so as to mislead the GBC, SABHA and others concerned with the issue of Vaishnavis initiating in ISKCON. The authors are likely sincere and well-meaning devotees, but they have misused sastra to try to promote their own political view.

SABHA members should not only reject the paper but recognize the deceptive mentality behind it. This is the sort of convoluted evidence opponents of VDGs give to try to overturn



Srila Prabhupada's direct statement that all his spiritual sons and daughters could initiate disciples.

Thank you.

Your servant,

Kalakantha das ACBSP

On Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 4:30 AM Damodara Dasa

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)> wrote:

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Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 11:51 AM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>

To: [carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com), [damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)

Cc: [nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com), [sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com),

[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com), [pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com),

[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com), [brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com),

[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com), [ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com),

[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net), [bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com),

[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com), [BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net),

[chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com), [dhruva.k.108@gmail.com](mailto:dhruva.k.108@gmail.com),

[divyajps@yahoo.com](mailto:divyajps@yahoo.com), [Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net),

[Kratudas108@yahoo.com](mailto:Kratudas108@yahoo.com), [mpd.vda@gmail.com](mailto:mpd.vda@gmail.com),

[Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net), [mahatmadasa@gmail.com](mailto:mahatmadasa@gmail.com),

[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com), [ruciradasi@gmail.com](mailto:ruciradasi@gmail.com),

[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com), [siddha\\_007@163.com](mailto:siddha_007@163.com),

[janavidevi@hotmail.com](mailto:janavidevi@hotmail.com), [sriradhita@gmail.com](mailto:sriradhita@gmail.com),

[vrnda16@icloud.com](mailto:vrnda16@icloud.com), [krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)

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Damodara Prabhu,

Please accept my obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

You asked my understanding of the Suniti verse, which you said clearly indicates woman cannot initiate. If the verse on Suniti was meant to substantiate that woman cannot initiate, I am confused why you previously said you are not against woman initiating (I also heard your guru maharaj say this). Perhaps you wish to explain this to us.

If you mean that a woman who is a liberated soul can initiate, wouldn't Prabhupada have said Suniti couldn't initiate because she was not liberated. If this verse is taken to mean, however, that woman cannot initiate, this would have been the right place for Prabhupada to make that conclusion clear if he indeed did not intend to have woman as diksa gurus in Iskcon (ever or until they are liberated). And if this is his intention, I find it confusing that he asked his daughters to become initiating gurus and never anywhere mentioned that his female disciples could not take up this service, only his male disciples, or only females when they 100 percent transcended their conditioned nature? To me, it sounds like you are making Prabhupada mean and say something he didn't mean or say.

My understanding is that Suniti could not initiate because in the culture of that era women did not receive diksa, neither did sudras and vaisyas, what to speak of mlecchas. Thus if we are to be judged by those standards, none of us could receive initiation, what to speak of give it. And how can we believe Prabhupada meant all women cannot initiate, being disqualified because of being women, knowing well that there were females in our lineage who initiated. Therefore, I suggest that this verse provides no more evidence for woman not initiating than the word "henceforward" provides evidence for ritvik vada. In other words, I suggest that this verse does not provide the unequivocal evidence you suggest it does, but only tells us that woman in that culture could not receive diksa and consequently not give diksa but that within our times and lineage this is not the case.

As a matter of interest, in the verse the words, "being a woman" were edited by Hayagriva Prabhu from Prabhupada's original "as a woman." My understanding is, as I said, as a woman did not receive diksa in those times, she could not give diksa. So Suniti, as a woman, could not give diksa. Suniti, if she lived today, could take diksa and thus her being a woman would not be a disqualification in giving diksa if she were qualified. So as a woman in that culture could not give diksa, she could not give diksa. This verse is not meant to disqualify women giving diksa today.

Your servant,

Mahatma das

In a message dated 1/5/2019 5:03:04 PM India Standard Time, [carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com) writes:

Dear Damodara Prabhu,

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I agree that strong feelings can arise in discussions like this, and I appreciate and concur with your gentlemanly approach. If I offend you in this discussion, please forgive me. I also appreciate you keeping the discussion concise and focused as opposed to the argumentum ad nauseum used by people who have no real case.

You argue that a single line from Srila Prabhupada's books should be extrapolated to apply to all of ISKCON, regardless of contravening statements from Srila Prabhupada elsewhere.

Srila Prabhupada's books are weightier than letters or lectures, yet because in the case you cite, his purports relate to ancient events being described in the text. For ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada often gives direct instructions that superficially contradict statements in his books. For instance, in the Nectar of Devotion he writes:

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This sounds like a straightforward, clear and all-encompassing instruction. Should we take it as a foundational injunction for the whole of ISKCON for the next ten thousand years? Should we promote installing Ganesa murtis in every temple? No, because Srila Prabhupada wrote specific letters telling his followers not to do so.

Similarly, Srila Prabhupada's statements about his female disciples initiating in ISKCON were specific. When the subject came up, he never referred to the purport you cite, the tiny scrap of evidence from his vani clung to by those who oppose allowing even one of Srila Prabhupada's beloved female disciples, who meet all qualifications listed by the GBC, to initiate in ISKCON.

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Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 2:12 PM

**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,

"Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>,

Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>,

Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Please see my reply to Mahatma Prabhu's inquiries below.  
Please forgive me for long reply, but trying to make the points  
very clear minimizing the words did not work for me.  
Apologies for any inconvenience or offenses.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

You asked my understanding of the Suniti verse, which you said clearly indicates woman cannot initiate. If the verse on Suniti was meant to substantiate that woman cannot initiate, I am confused why you previously said you are not against woman initiating (I also heard your guru maharaj say this). Perhaps you wish to explain this to us.

#### **Damodara Das Reply**

Thankyou for pointing this out. Yes. I didn't mean all women cannot initiate, but that non-siddha women cannot initiate. This is normal mode of speech many times used in sastras and is called *amra-vana-nyāya* or the logic of the mango forest. When I say that "this is a mango forest," I do not mean that there are no other trees in it but that vast majority of trees are mango trees. Thus when an injunction is given that "woman cannot initiate" it means that vast majority of women cannot initiate. This vast majority are the non-siddha women. That's the established rule.

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

If you mean that a woman who is a liberated soul can initiate, wouldn't Prabhupada have said Suniti couldn't initiate because she was not liberated. If this verse is taken to mean, however, that woman cannot initiate, this would have been the right place for Prabhupada to make that conclusion clear if he indeed did not intend to have woman as diksa gurus in Iskcon (ever or until they are liberated).

#### **Damodara Das Reply**

According to Bhagavad-gītā 3.17-25, Lord Krishna bring this point up that a liberated person is not bound by any rules of varnasrama. Then He answers this by saying that still he should follow the injunctions of varnasrama dharma, not for himself but for leading the society which otherwise would try immaturely imitate him and thus fall down. Thus, although the person

himself will not fall down due to not follow his duty but he will become the reason for falldown of the whole society.

Lord Krishna stressed it is this reason for which He Himself follows all duties when He comes here although there is no doubt of His being non-siddha.

Following this example, all great devotees of the Lord who are fully liberated, followed their varnasrama rules, be they women or men. Thus we see that even the great liberated ladies like Mother Yashoda, Devaki, Kunti, Draupadi, Rohini, Rukmini Radharani, Lalita and Devahuti they all didn't become diksa-guru. Exactly this is said by Lord Krishna (Bg 3.20)—

“Kings such as Janaka attained perfection solely by performance of prescribed duties. Therefore, just for the sake of educating the people in general, you should perform your work.”

**Kings like Janaka were all self-realized souls;** consequently they had no obligation to perform the prescribed duties in the Vedas. **Nonetheless they performed all prescribed activities just to set examples for the people in general.** Janaka was the father of Sītā and father-in-law of Lord Śrī Rāma. Being a great devotee of the Lord, he was transcendently situated, but because he was the king of Mithilā (a subdivision of Bihar province in India), he had to teach his subjects how to perform prescribed duties.

Thus, even if we take that siddha-women can initiate, clubbing it with the instructions of Lord Krishna, Srila Prabhupada (in section of Bg quoted above) and actions of great devotees of past, it comes to the conclusion that —

“Non-siddha women cannot initiate. For siddha-women also it is recommended by guru-sadhu-sastras to not become diksa-guru.”

Thus, it is a “very special case,” special circumstance that may dictate for a woman to be appointed to the position of a diksa-guru. Thus we see only a few in our line like Jāhnavā mātā “but she” also “did not declare.”

So, Srila Prabhupada is making a point of rule SB 4.12.32, purport that women cannot initiate. As exceptions are not legislated, Srila Prabhupada need not mention the exceptions in the purport itself. You do not always go on mentioning the exceptions when you mention the rule, lest the exception get same emphasis as the rule.

Also following of the *āmra-vana-nyāya* in this case is natural.

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

My understanding is that Suniti could not initiate because in the culture of that era women did not receive diksa, neither did sudras and vaisyas, what to speak of mleccchas. Thus if we are to be judged by those standards, none of us could receive initiation, what to speak of give it. And how can we believe Prabhupada meant all women cannot initiate, being disqualified because of being women, knowing well that there were females in our lineage who initiated. Therefore, I suggest that this verse provides no more evidence for woman not initiating than the word "henceforward" provides evidence for ritvik vada. In other words, I suggest that this verse does not provide the unequivocal evidence you suggest it does, but only tells us that woman in that culture could not receive diksa and consequently not give diksa but that within our times and lineage this is not the case.

#### Damodara Das Reply

The culture of Suniti's era was Vedic Culture. And Vedic Culture was depend on Vedic scriptures—śruti, smṛti, purāṇa, pañcarātra, etc. **Thus, I think you are accepting that Srila Prabhupada says that according to Vedic literatures (śāstra) and Pamparā (sādhu) women “could not become diksa-gurus.”**

Now the reason you have thought of (which is not directly spoken by Prabhupada in the purport) is that because they did not receive diksa they could not give diksa. You support it with the point that even sudras did not get diksa and thus they were also not allowed to give diksa. But within our lineage women can receive diksa and thus give diksa.

Great. This looks logical. But does this mean that one who receives diksa can give diksa?

No. In vedic times also brahmanas, ksatriyas, and vaisyas received diksa (seems you have got some misinformation that vaisyas did not get diksa). But it was only the prerogative of brahmanas to give diksa and become guru. Others were banned to become guru. But there were exceptions to this rule; if brahmana guru was not available then ksatriyas or vaisyas could become guru.

Thus it is established that receiving diksa doesn't make one eligible to give it also.

**Now, why in our lineage women can receive diksa?** It is because we follow pancaratrīki vidhi where women are also allowed to take diksa. So let us see if pancaratras allow women to give diksa also?

Exactly this interpretation led us to have thorough research on pancaratras which consequently became the subject matter of our paper on Narada-pancaratra which all of you have seen. We are thankful to the SAC who explained out the SB 4.12.32 in their 2013 paper in a way similar to this explanation by Mahatma Prabhu, thus leading us to expand our understanding in the matter of diksas in ISKCON and we have found extremely valuable information proving Srila Prabhupada's genius of exactly following sastras and his thorough genuinity. In the paper we have established with all evidences that—

Women, as a rule can receive diksa (1.14-15) but cannot give diksa (1.42-43). Rules are first established and then exceptions are dealt with in the 44<sup>th</sup> verse (1.44) which says that for liberated souls varna, etc (etc involves linga or gender and thus



women also as per rules of mimamsa) need not be considered.

[Note: we are going to show in separate email where in 1.44 siddha is separated from sadhaka and where in Narada pancaratra women are separated from sudra]

**Thus Srila Prabhupada's words in SB 4.12.32, purport, stand still even in the pancaratrīki vidhi we follow today in ISKCON.**

Regarding females initiating in our lineage, I already explained in the reply above to this.

Because we follow pancaratrīki vidhi we can receive diksa even if sudras or anyone. It is not against sastras.

[Also, a side point but important: As it is a mistake to say that one born in a brahmana family is a brahmana; it is also a mistake to say that one born in mleccha family is also a mleccha. One must be seen according to symptoms, that's the rule. In cases when samskaras are in place does the rule of lineages defining one's varna apply. ]

[Another side point is that Dhruva-maharaja received pancaratrīki diksa and not vaidiki diksa. This is because of his age; 5 years; savitri (upanayana) opens at the age of 7 years. He got the mantra "om namo bhagavate vasudevaya" which is a pancaratrīka dvadasakṣra mantra as explained by Hari-bhakti-vilasa 1.1.25-28. It quotes Dhruva's example. Please see the attached document to see the pramanas]

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

And if this is his intention, I find it confusing that he asked his daughters to become initiating gurus and never anywhere mentioned that his female disciples could not take up this service, only his male disciples, or only females when they 100 percent transcended their conditioned nature? To me, it sounds like you are making Prabhupada mean and say something he didn't mean or say.

**Damodara Das Reply**

This is a good question and forces us to delve deep into our understandings of Srila Prabhupada and sastras. That is where we need to follow *guru-sadhu-sastra vakya tinete koriya aikya*; synchronization is required for in depth understanding. Thankyou for asking this.

However, I choose to reply this matter separately in an email thread as it is also to be replied to the query of Kalakanta Prabhu and also because this reply has become quite long for the readers to keep attention.

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

As a matter of interest, in the verse the words , "being a woman" were edited by Hayagriva Prabhu from Prabhupada's original "as a woman." My understanding is, as I said, as a woman did not receive diksa in those times, she could not give diksa. So Suniti, as a woman, could not give diksa. Suniti, if she lived today, could take diksa and thus her being a woman would not be a disqualification in giving diksa if she were qualified. So as a woman in that culture could not give diksa, she could not give diksa. This verse is not meant to disqualify women giving diksa today.

**Damodara Das Reply**

Yes, I read this argument in Kaunteya Prabhu's book. I think you have mistaken here a little bit – Prabhupada's original doesn't say "as a woman" but it says "and also a woman." The original transcript is as follows (SB 4.12.32, purport)—

"According to sastric injunctions, there is no difference between siksa guru and diksa guru, and generally the siksa guru becomes later on diksa guru. Suniti, however, being in family relationship with Dhruva, his mother, **and also woman**, could not become the diksa guru of Dhruva Maharaja"

Thus if you see it means—

Being his mother in family relationship with Dhruva

And

Also being woman

Suniti could not become the diksa-guru of Dhruva Maharaja.

Thus both reasons are there for Suniti's not being able to become diksa-guru. Rest of the question already answered before

[END Of Reply]

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Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 2:25 PM



**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Kalakanta Prabhu,

Please accept my humble obeisances,

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Sorry, I could not reply your emails you sent yesterday after 5

pm.

Today I replied email from Mahatma Prabhu. Now I am preparing to reply your email and you may expect my reply by today evening 6 pm or by tomorrow morning 11 am.

I am following my daily morning and evening program schedule and thus

I am on my emails and research work from morning 9 am to evening 6 pm IST.

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Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 3:47 PM



**Sati devi dasi**

<sati.bts@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Dear SABHA members, and honorable guests,  
please accept my humble obeisance  
All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

Dear Damodara prabhu, thank you for taking your time to  
kindly explain your position on the topic.  
Sincerely hope that you will find time to reply to my tiny  
question and other questions to come and really appreciate  
this.

#### Quote:

*Damodara Das Reply*

*Thankyou for pointing this out. Yes. I didn't mean all women cannot initiate, but that non-siddha women cannot initiate. This is normal mode of speech many times used in sastras and is called āmra-vana-nyāya or the logic of the mango forest. When I say that "this is a mango forest," I do not mean that there are no other trees in it but that vast majority of trees are mango trees. Thus when an injunction is given that "woman cannot initiate" it means that vast majority of women cannot initiate. This vast majority are the non-siddha women. That's the established rule.*

My question:

It is amazing that to answer a direct question such type of "injunction" is used that creates uncertainty in understanding of the view. What is the purpose of creating this misunderstanding while answering a direct question? Why do you say, "all women cannot initiate" while meaning "only siddha women can initiate"? Could you please kindly explain the purpose of using such figures of speech in this exact situation?

Looking forward to your reply,

ys Sati dd

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Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 4:04 PM

**[Damodara Dasa](#)**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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speech in  
this exact situation?

DD Reply:

Yes. I thought it would be obvious to the members involved after they have already read the paper. But I was wrong and thus clarified it as my answer to the question when specifically asked. I was not of the intention of creating some confusion. I will try to be more cautious in future.

Also I request to focus on the subject matter; after all, intentions are not always judged by words only. I hope members will understand this. My first language is not English and thus you may find some errors in my English presentation but I hope you will excuse me considering me your child and also considering SB 1.5.10.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

On 1/6/19, Sati devi dasi <[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)> wrote:

- > Dear SABHA members, and honorable guests,
- > please accept my humble obeisance
- > All glory to Srila Prabhupada!
- >
- > Dear Damodara prabhu, thank you for taking your time to kindly explain your
- > position on the topic.

- > Sincerely hope that you will find time to reply to my tiny question and
- > other questions to come and really appreciate this.
- > Quote:
- >
- > \*Damodara Das Reply\*
- >
- > \*Thankyou for pointing this out. Yes. I didn't mean all women cannot
- > initiate, but that non-siddha women cannot initiate. This is normal mode of
- > speech many times used in sastras and is called āmra-vana-nyāya or the
- > logic of the mango forest. When I say that “this is a mango forest,” I do
- > not mean that there are no other trees in it but that vast majority of
- > trees are mango trees. Thus when an injunction is given that “woman cannot
- > initiate” it means that vast majority of women cannot initiate. This vast
- > majority are the non-siddha women. That's the established rule.\*
- [-Show quoted text-](#)
- >> \*Damodara Das Reply\*
- >>
- >> Thankyou for pointing this out. Yes. I didn't mean all women cannot
- >> initiate, but that non-siddha women cannot initiate. This is normal mode
- >> of
- >> speech many times used in sastras and is called \*āmra-vana-nyāya\* or the
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that “woman

>> cannot

>> initiate” it means that vast majority of women cannot initiate. This vast

>> majority are the non-siddha women. That’s the established rule.

>>

>>

>>

>> Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

>>

>> If you mean that a woman who is a liberated soul can initiate, wouldn't

>> Prabhupada have said Suniti couldn't initiate because she was not

>> liberated. If this verse is taken to mean, however, that woman cannot

>> initiate, this would have been the right place for Prabhupada to make

>> that

>> conclusion clear if he indeed did not intend to have woman as diksa gurus

>> in Iskcon (ever or until they are liberated).

>>

>> \*Damodara Das Reply\*

>>

>> According to Bhagavad-gītā 3.17-25, Lord Krishna bring this point up that

>> a liberated person is not bound by any rules of varnasrama. Then He

>> answers

>> this by saying that still he should follow the injunctions of varnasrma

>> dharma, not for himself but for leading the society which otherwise would

>> try immaturely imitate him and thus fall down. Thus, although the person

>> himself will not fall down due to not follow his duty but he will become  
>> the reason for falldown of the whole society.  
>>  
>> Lord Krishna stressed it is this reason for which He Himself follows all  
>> duties when He comes here although there is no doubt of His being  
>> non-siddha.  
>>  
>> Following this example, all great devotees of the Lord who are fully  
>> liberated, followed their varnasrama rules, be they women or men. Thus we  
>> see that even the great liberated ladies like Mother Yashoda, Devaki,  
>> Kunti, Draupadi, Rohini, Rukmini Radharani, Lalita and Devahuti they all  
>> didn't become diksa-guru. Exactly this is said by Lord Krishna (Bg 3.20)—  
>>  
>> “Kings such as Janaka attained perfection solely by performance of  
>> prescribed duties. Therefore, just for the sake of educating the people  
>> in  
>> general, you should perform your work.”  
>>  
>> \*Kings like Janaka were all self-realized souls\*;  
consequently they had  
>> no obligation to perform the prescribed duties in the Vedas.  
\*Nonetheless  
>> they performed all prescribed activities just to set examples for the  
>> people in general.\* Janaka was the father of Sītā and father-in-law of  
>> Lord Śrī Rāma. Being a great devotee of the Lord, he was

transcendentally

>> situated, but because he was the king of Mithilā (a subdivision of Bihar

>> province in India), he had to teach his subjects how to perform

>> prescribed

>> duties.

>>

>> Thus, even if we take that siddha-women can initiate, clubbing it with

>> the

>> instructions of Lord Krishna, Srila Prabhupada (in section of Bg quoted

>> above) and actions of great devotees of past, it comes to the conclusion

>> that —

>>

>> “Non-siddha women cannot initiate. For siddha-women also it is

>> recommended

>> by guru-sadhu-sastras to not become diksa-guru.”

>>

>> Thus, it is a “very special case,” special circumstance that may dictate

>> for a woman to be appointed to the position of a diksa-guru. Thus we see

>> only a few in our line like Jāhnavā mātā “but she” also “did not

>> declare.”

>>

>> So, Srila Prabhupada is making a point of rule SB 4.12.32, purport that

>> women cannot initiate. As exceptions are not legislated, Srila Prabhupada

>> need not mention the exceptions in the purport itself. You do not always

>> go



>> on mentioning the exceptions when you mention the rule,  
lest the  
>> exception  
>> get same emphasis as the rule.  
>>  
>> Also following of the \*āmra-vana-nyāya\* in this case is  
natural.  
>>  
>>  
>>  
>> Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)  
>>  
>> My understanding is that Suniti could not initiate because  
in the culture  
>> of that era women did not receive diksa, neither did sudras  
and vaisyas,  
>> what to speak of mlecchas. Thus if we are to be judged by  
those  
>> standards,  
>> none of us could receive initiation, what to speak of give it.  
And how  
>> can  
>> we believe Prabhupada meant all women cannot initiate,  
being disqualified  
>> because of being women, knowing well that there were  
females in our  
>> lineage  
>> who initiated. Therefore, I suggest that this verse provides  
no more  
>> evidence for woman not initiating than the word  
"henceforward" provides  
>> evidence for ritvik vada. In other words, i suggest that this  
verse does  
>> not provide the unequivocal evidence you suggest it does,  
but only tells  
>> us  
>> that woman in that culture could not receive diksa and

consequently not

>> give diksa but that within out times and lineage this is not the case.

>>

>> \*Damodara Das Reply\*

>>

>> The culture of Suniti's era was Vedic Culture. And Vedic Culture was

>> depend on Vedic scriptures—śruti, smṛti, purāṇa, pañcarātra, etc. \*Thus,

>> I think you are accepting that Srila Prabhupada says that according to

>> Vedic literatures (śāstra) and Paramparā (sādhu) women “could not become

>> diksa-gurus.”\*

>>

>> Now the reason you have thought of (which is not directly spoken by

>> Prabhupada in the purport) is that because they did not receive diksa

>> they

>> could not give diksa. You support it with the point that even sudras did

>> not get diksa and thus they were also not allowed to give diksa. But

>> within

>> our lineage women can receive diksa and thus give diksa.

>>

>> Great. This looks logical. But does this mean that one who receives diksa

>> can give diksa?

>>

>> No. In vedic times also brahmanas, ksatriyas, and vaisyas received diksa

>> (seems you have got some misinformation that vaisyas did not get diksa).

>> But it was only the prerogative of brahmanas to give diksa

and become

>> guru.

>> Others were banned to become guru. But there were exceptions to this

>> rule;

>> if brahmana guru was not available then ksatriyas or vaisyas could become

>> guru.

>>

>> Thus it is established that receiving diksa doesn't make one eligible to

>> give it also.

>>

>> \*Now, why in our lineage women can receive diksa?\* It is because we

>> follow pancaratriki vidhi where women are also allowed to take diksa. So

>> let us see if pancaratras allow women to give diksa also?

>>

>> Exactly this interpretation led us to have thorough research on

>> pancaratras which consequently became the subject matter of our paper on

>> Narada-pancaratra which all of you have seen. We are thankful to the SAC

>> who explained out the SB 4.12.32 in their 2013 paper in a way similar to

>> this explanation by Mahatma Prabhu, thus leading us to expand our

>> understanding in the matter of diksas in ISKCON and we have found

>> extremely

>> valuable information proving Srila Prabhupada's genius of exactly

>> following

>> sastras and his thorough genuinity. In the paper we have established with

>> all evidences that—  
>>  
>> Women, as a rule can receive diksa (1.14-15) but cannot give diksa  
>> (1.42-43). Rules are first established and then exceptions are dealt with  
>> in the 44th verse (1.44) which says that for liberated souls varna, etc  
>> (etc involves linga or gender and thus women also as per rules of  
>> mimamsa)  
>> need not be considered.  
>>  
>> [Note: we are going to show in separate email where in 1.44 siddha is  
>> separated from sadhaka and where in Narada pancaratra women are separated  
>> from sudra]  
>>  
>> \*Thus Srila Prabhupada's words in SB 4.12.32, purport, stand still even  
>> in  
>> the pancaratrici vidhi we follow today in ISKCON. \*  
[-Show quoted text-](#)  
>> \*Damodara Das Reply\*  
>>  
>> This is a good question and forces us to delve deep into our  
>> understandings of Srila Prabhupada and sastras. That is where we need to  
>> follow \*guru-sadhu-sastra vakya tinete koriya aikya\*;  
>> synchronization is  
>> required for in depth understanding. Thankyou for asking this.  
>>  
>> However, I choose to reply this matter separately in an email thread as  
>> it  
>> is also to be replied to the query of Kalakanta Prabhu and

also because

>> this reply has become quite long for the readers to keep attention.

>>

>>

>>

>> Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

>>

>> As a matter of interest, in the verse the words , "being a woman" were

>> edited by Hayagriva Prabhu from Prabhupada's original "as a woman." My

>> understanding is, as I said, as a woman did not receive diksa in those

>> times, she could not give diksa. So Suniti, as a woman, could not give

>> diksa. Suniti, if she lived today, could take diksa and thus her being a

>> woman would not be a disqualification in giving diksa if she were

>> qualified. So as a woman in that culture could not give diksa, she could

>> not give diksa. This verse is not meant to disqualify women giving diksa

>> today.

>>

>> \*Damodara Das Reply\*

>>

>> Yes, I read this argument in Kaunteya Prabhu's book. I think you have

>> mistaken here a little bit – Prabhupada's original doesn't say "as a

>> woman"

>> but it says "and also a woman." The original transcript is as follows (SB

>> 4.12.32, purport)—

>>

>> "According to sastric injunctions, there is no difference between siksa  
>> guru and diksa guru, and generally the siksa guru becomes later on diksa  
>> guru. Suniti, however, being in family relationship with Dhruva, his  
>> mother, \*and also woman,\* could not become the diksa guru of Dhruva

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Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 4:45 PM



**[Sati devi dasi](#)**

<sati.bts@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi



devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Dear Damodara prabhu,  
please accept my humble obeisance  
All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

Thank you for your prompt reply. Please know that my intention is to understand properly.

One more question. Please note that it is a sincere question that I have.

The foundation of your paper is one verse about Mother Suniti. Usually, many occurrences are required to make a rule, only one occurrence is ruled out as an exception.

Could you please say if there are other verses or quotes from Srila Prabhupada's comments that directly support your point of view? I am interested in the sastras that Srila Prabhupada instructed us to study thoroughly: BG, SB, CC, Nectar of Devotion, Nectar of Instruction, Isa Upanisad.

On a side note, I must confess I, personally find, the logic of your narration is not easy to flow, and sometimes it seems that in drawing your conclusions some jump was made or a few steps were skipped to explain. As I have now understood from your reply to my first question, you assume that many things "would be obvious". It would be great to discuss every such instance with you, if only I had time.

Please forgive me if my questions seem silly to you, but I was trained to pay attention to every detail.

I am in the same situation as you as English is not my first language, so please be so kind to take this into consideration.

best regards,  
ys Sati dd

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Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 5:17 PM

 **[Damodara Dasa](#)**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Sati Mataji,

Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

>> Usually, many occurrences are required to make a rule,  
only one occurrence is ruled out as an exception.

This is not the case when the rule is specified. Neither it is a  
case  
that many occurrences of examples make a rule.

For example, all over Vedic literatures we find, full of all  
occurrences, that varna is judged by birth and lineage. If you  
search  
for occurrences, you find many many times more occurrences of  
varna  
judged by birth than by qualities.

But the rule that it is by qualities is mentioned at very rare  
places  
of which the most vocal evidence is yasya yal-laksanam  
proktam verse  
(SB 7.11.35) --- one's varna should be judged by symptom or  
qualities.  
But Srila Prabhupada quoted this verse often and took it as a  
main  
rule for judging varna and judging varna by birth was rejected  
as not  
the main but subsidiary rule.

Thus in this statement, when Prabhupada mentions it as a  
reason, it  
should be understood as such.

Moreover, as this rule is also supported by sastras and sadhu  
(tradition), this also supports our accepting SP as mentioning

it as a rule. How it is supported by sadhu and sastra is detailed in our paper and the objections to that paper has been raised by Kalakanta Prabhu which I am planning to clarify by tomorrow 11am. If you have any new objection, besides what Kalakanta Prabhu has kindly raised to that paper, you are welcome to put here.

Regarding our paper, I think you have got a wrong impression that its founded on the Suniti verse. You may want to read the paper, I think. Its mainly based on Narada pancaratra harmonizing instructions of Srila Prabhupada with regard to FDG.

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Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 5:33 PM



**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA"

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>,

Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris

Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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On Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 5:17 PM Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)> wrote:

Regarding our paper, I think you have got a wrong impression that its founded on the Suniti verse. You may want to read the paper, I think.  
Its mainly based on Narada pancaratra harmonizing instructions of Srila Prahbupada with regard to FDG.

Actually, we don't even mention Suniti or Dhruva in that paper.

Ys Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 5:37 PM

**[Damodara Dasa](#)**

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>

Cc: Sati devi dasi <[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA"  
<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>,  
Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami  
<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara  
Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris  
Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa  
Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Yes.

I request devotees to first carefully read the paper in order to understand our discussion properly.

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 11:56 AM

**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma  
Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,



"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances,

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Please find below my reply to the email by Kalakantha Prabhu (6-1-2019; 5:02 pm) he posted on Suniti verse in this email Thread:

[Note: To the question he has asked me on another thread on Suniti verse relating to guru-sadhu-sastra harmonization I will be generating another email thread as the discussion will be involving some technical topics in order for devotees to keep easy track and visibility]

Thankyou,

Your servant,  
damodara das

Kalakantha Prabhu (6-1-2019; 5:02 pm)

You argue that a single line from Srila Prabhupada's books should be extrapolated to apply to all of ISKCON, regardless of contravening statements from Srila Prabhupada elsewhere.

**Damodara Das Reply:**

Absolutely NOT. Our paper on Narada-pancaratra (which was supplied to SABHA) is a full attempt to harmonize apparently contradicting statements of Srila Prabhupada taking full help of sastras without trying to imagine which instruction of Srila Prabhupada is relevant for today's ISKCON and which isn't. I suggest you to read our paper carefully. Answers to your contentions on that paper will be addressed in a separate email.

If not taken help from sastras, both parties pro-FDG and anti-FDG bring different quotes of Srila Prabhupada that (they feel) support them and cling to them saying these are the ones that need to be accepted and other statements need to be explained out. This is what is happening. But Bharadvaja-samhita very beautifully harmonizes all instructions of Srila Prabhupada in this regard.

*Kalakantha Prabhu regarding Books are heavier than conversations etc.*

Sorry, this was not my main point but side point. If you want to discuss this out thoroughly, I can generate another email thread specifically discussing this point, as it requires thorough technical understanding of the science of Vedic epistemology and hermeneutics, technically called nyaya- and mimamsa-sastras. Even the point of not to engage in Ganesa worship can be easily derived from the books of Srila Prabhupada without resorting to conversations etc. and harmonizing that single NoD statement with other numerous statements in SP books themselves as well as getting a lot of evidences from pancaratra literatures which ISKCON itself follows in regards for worship.

From you email in another thread I find that you want to discuss this in detail and thus I will generate another thread in which this particular will be explained and discussed.

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 11:59 AM

**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,

Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>,

Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>,"

BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Pranams.

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Below is my reply to Kalakantha Prabhu's email (6-1-2019; 5:20 pm) on the contentions to our paper on Narada Pancaratra.

Sorry for the long one, but I could not make it short in fear of getting misunderstood.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

Kalakantha Prabhu (6-1-2019; 5:20 pm)

These verses make no distinction whatsoever between the spiritual opportunities available to women and to those born sudras or less. Yet the authors (in their Executive Summary) somehow extract the following conclusions:

- Bharadvaja Samhita gives criteria by which both sādhakas and siddhas can be judged eligible to become dīkṣā-guru.
- Sādhakas who are men of brāhmaṇa-, kṣatriya-, or vaiśya-varṇa (by quality) can become dīkṣā-guru.
- Sādhakas who are women, śūdras or antyajas (lower than śūdras) are forbidden to act as dīkṣā-guru.
- Śūdras or antyajas get the body of a brāhmaṇa if properly initiated and can also become dīkṣā-guru. But gender does not change with dīkṣā.

- Bharadvaja Samhita still restricts women who are sādhakas from initiating.

**Damodara Das Reply:**

Do these verses make distinction between spiritual opportunities available to women and sudras or others?

No. Because there *is* no difference. Both can take diksa; but none of them can become diksa-guru. However there is a difference of them to brahmanas, ksatriyas, and vaisyas.

A question may be raised that then the gurus in ISKCON as envisioned by Srila Prabhupada are all unauthentic according to the version of Bharadvaja-samhita as almost all are coming from the families even lower than sudras.

No. They aren't; they are bonafide. The first misunderstanding in the above question is that it takes sudras etc. based on birth. But actually it is based on qualities as we fully learn it from our own Srila Prabhupada and sastras (SB 7.11.35). If we accept that brahmanas etc are by qualities then our whole problem is solved.

As it is a misconception to think that anyone born of brahmana family is a brahmana;

Similarly it is a misconception to think that anyone born of a sudra or mleccha family is a mleccha.

Due to lack of samskaras in kali-yuga the strict connection of family lineage to varna doesn't hold. Anyone is born anywhere — even souls with brahmana prarabdha (previous karmas) are born in sudra and mleccha families, while even souls with sudra and mleccha prarabdha are born in brahmana families. Thus only symptoms or qualities remain the sole factor to judge who is who.

Thus here we understand that Bharadvaja samhita is prohibiting those who have qualities of sudra or lower from becoming guru.

Similarly Bharadvaja samhita is prohibiting those who have symptoms or qualities of woman from becoming guru. Now the sole symptom by which one identifies a woman, either in sastra or in practical life, at any time, place or circumstance is her gender (liṅga) i.e. by physical characteristics. Thus as far as Bharadvaja samhita is concerned, it prohibits woman from becoming diksa-guru. The only exception to this rule is a siddha woman as per BS 1.44.

Kalakantha Prabhu (6-1-2019; 5:20 pm)

None of these statements from the "Executive Summary" can be found in the verses. Of the practice employed here by the authors, Srila Prabhupada writes (SB 1.1.4): "Personal realization does not mean that one should, out of vanity, attempt to show one's own learning by trying to surpass the previous ācārya....The original purpose of the text must be maintained. No obscure meaning should be screwed out of it..."

**Damodara Das Reply:**

You need to show meaning of which statement from the above four is screw out and how it is screwed out. These are our statements from ES—

- Bharadvaja Samhita gives criteria by which both sādhakas and siddhas can be judged eligible to become dīkṣā-guru

Explanation from verses BS 1.38-44—mention of word "self-realized – seeing God face-to-face" distinguishes sadhakas from siddhas and clearly shows that the considerations mentioned before were for those who are not "self-realized – seeing God face-to-face," which we call sadhakas.

- Sādhakas who are men of brāhmaṇa-, kṣatriya-, or vaiśya-varṇa (by quality) can become dīkṣā-guru.

Directly from the verses 38-41

- Sādhakas who are women, śūdras or antyajas (lower than śūdras) are forbidden to act as dīkṣā-guru.

Directly from the verses 42-43

- Śūdras or antyajas get the body of a brāhmaṇa if properly initiated and can also become dīkṣā-guru. But gender does not change with dīkṣā.

This is legitimately derived in the paper itself, fully based on sastras, without speculation. After all you need to connect different statements of sastras with other sastras and statements of guru in order to have *guru-sadhu-sastra vakya tinate koriya aikya*. For instance if I write in the aim of a mathematical paper attempt that it proves the formula --  $\cos(a)\cos(b)-\sin(a)\sin(b) = \cos(a+b)$  and in the appendix mention the basic formulas of cosine and sine as  $\cos = \text{adjacent/hypotenuse}$  and  $\sin = \text{opposite/hypotenuse}$ . Then if someone just tries himself to see " $\cos(a)\cos(b)-\sin(a)\sin(b) = \cos(a+b)$ " in the appendix itself, he will just get frustrated and think that the author is screwing out something. But to legitimately prove this, is the AIM of the paper and thus you need to see the derivation in the paper.

You may want to carefully read the full paper instead of just Executive summary and a part of verses in the Appendix, to understand this.

- Bharadvaja Samhita still restricts women who are sādhakas from initiating.

Directly from verses 42-43

Thus the meanings are not screwed out.

Kalakantha Prabhu (6-1-2019; 5:20 pm)

The original meaning of these beautiful verses is clear and important: everyone can become a pure devotee. These verses are a cornerstone of Srila Prabhupada's mission to make pure Krishna conscious devotees all over the world, even among those judged unqualified by body conscious kali-yuga brahmanas.

**Damodara Das Reply:**

Thankyou that you accept the authority of these verses and thus Bharadvaja samhita, do you?

Kalakantha Prabhu (6-1-2019; 5:20 pm)

The authors go on to distinguish between their injected term 'sadhaka' and siddhas, perfected devotees. Here is Srila Prabhupada's comment to those making this distinction between siddhas and asiddhas in ISKCON:

"All of my disciples are pure devotees. Anyone sincerely serving the spiritual master is a pure devotee, it may be Siddhasvarupa or others, a-Siddhasvarupa. This must be very clearly stated. It is not only that your Siddhasvarupa is a pure devotee and not others. Do not try to make a faction. Siddhasvarupa is a good soul. But others should not be misled. Anyone who is surrendered to the spiritual master is a pure devotee, it doesn't matter if Siddhasvarupa or non-Siddhasvarupa. Amongst ourselves one should respect others as Prabhu, master, one another. As soon as we distinguish here is a pure devotee, here is a non-pure devotee, that means I am a nonsense." (SPL, Ahmedabad, Dec. 14, 1972).

**Damodara Das Reply:**

Do you want to tell on the basis of this quote that one should not try to discriminate between levels of devotees? I am sorry if you mean it so. It clashes directly with hundreds of statements of Srila Prabhupada in his books as well as other recorded teachings. For instance—

In order to intelligently apply the sixfold loving reciprocations mentioned in the previous verse, **one must select proper persons with careful discrimination.** Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore advises **that we should meet with the Vaiṣṇavas in an appropriate way, according to their particular status.** In this verse he tells us how to deal with three types of devotees—the **kaniṣṭha-adhikārī, madhyama-adhikārī and uttama-adhikārī.** The kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is a neophyte who has received the hari-nāma initiation from the spiritual master and is trying to chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. One should respect such a person within his mind as a kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava. A madhyama-adhikārī has received spiritual initiation from the spiritual master and has been fully engaged by him in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The madhyama-adhikārī should be considered to be situated midway in devotional service. The uttama-adhikārī, or highest devotee, is one who is very advanced in devotional service. An uttama-adhikārī is not interested in blaspheming others, his heart is completely clean, and he has attained the realized state of unalloyed Kṛṣṇa consciousness. According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the association and service of such a mahā-bhāgavata, or perfect Vaiṣṇava, are most desirable....

This is the way to cultivate devotional service properly; therefore in this verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has advised us how to treat various devotees. We can see from practical experience that there are different types of Vaiṣṇavas....

**Indeed, the advanced uttama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava devotee should be accepted as a spiritual master....**

However, one should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or mahā-bhāgavata without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually become degraded.

**In this verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī advises the devotee to be intelligent enough to distinguish between the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī, madhyama-adhikārī and uttama-adhikārī.**

>> Nectar of Instruction, 5, purport

Moreover, if we accept your stance that one should not discriminate between uttama-adhikari and kanistha-adhikari, it meets logical fallacy. Person A tell to person B, "you should not discriminate between sadhaka and siddha." This means that person A feels that person B's practice of discriminating sadhaka from siddha is wrong and thus person B is not siddha. Thus person A has discriminated between sadhaka and siddha. This meets a logical fallacy.

Then what does the above quote of Srila Prabhupada mean?

Actually Srila Prabhupada is speaking about the group of siddha-svarupa, one of his disciples, who had become a sahajiya with a full group of devotees who considered him siddha like Srila Prabhupada. This very idea was creating faction in ISKCON and thus Srila Prabhupada is trying to answer this saying "don't try to make a faction."

He says "Anyone sincerely serving the spiritual master is a pure devotee, it may be Siddhasvarupa or others, a-Siddhasvarupa."

This describes the pure devotee in sadhana stage as is mentioned in Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu. It mentions that pure devotional service is performed in three stages—sādhana, bhāva, and prema. It is as follows:

*sā bhaktiḥ sādhanam bhāvaḥ premā ceti tridhōditā ||1.2.1||*

That pure devotional service (pure devotional service as mentioned before by the verse 1.1.11 as anyābhilāṣitā śūnyam...) rises at three levels: sādhana, bhāva, and prema.

Śri Viśvanātha Cakravarti Ṭhākura writes in his commentary to this:

*athātra sādhana-sādhya-rūpa-dvividha-bheda evāstu | bhāvasyāpi sādhya-bhakti-antarbhāvo'stu |*

Specifically it is to be understood that bhakti is actually of two types sādhana-rūpa (having form of sādhana) and sādhya-rūpa (having form of sādhya). Bhāva and prema are included in sādhya bhakti.

Thus, this pure devotee as mentioned by Srila Prabhupada is not to be understood as the uttama-adhikari level. Srila Prabhupada says in Nol 5 purport—

One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of uttama-adhikārī. A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an uttama-adhikārī as a spiritual master.

This concludes my replies. Hope this helps.

ps.

**This is a side point but important:** the word "spiritual opportunity" used in the paragraph just after completion of verses as mentioned in the questions by Kalakantha Prabhu is not applicable here in its full sense. Becoming guru is not an opportunity; it is a service. According to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, anyone who wants an opportunity to become guru is, by that wish itself, disqualified to become guru—"if a guru thinks, 'I am a guru.' then the first 'u' letter in the word guru disappears (the word becomes 'garu' or cow)." [Ray of Visnu, 5]

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 1:01 PM

**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>,"



Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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For those who may not want to read long reply unless they are interested,

This is a short summary of the points in my reply to Kalakanta Prabhus email dated 6-1-2019; 5:20 pm regarding our paper on Narada Pancaratra. However, I suggest to those who do not get some point clear by reading this summary, to read the full reply, which is also attached as a document to this email

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

Summary of the reply to Kalakantha prabhu's email dated 6-1-2019, 5:20 pm

- These verses make no distinction whatsoever between the spiritual opportunities available to women and to those born sudras or less because there is no distinction—both can take diksa (BS 1.14-15) but none of them can give diksa (BS 1.42-43)
- ISKCON gurus are bonafide because brahmana etc. are judged by qualities and not by birth, thus one born in sudra or mleccha family is not to be taken as mleccha
- Thus, BS prohibits from being diksa-guru, those with symptoms or qualities of sudras or lower
- Thus BS also prohibits those with symptoms or qualities of woman from being diksa-guru

- Symptom or quality of woman is judged by gender only and thus women as gender are prohibited
- The only exception to this rule is a siddha woman as per BS 1.44
- **Regarding Screwing out meaning from the verses of BS—**
  - **Rules for Sadhakas and siddhas to become guru found in BS 1.38-44**  
How? Mention in Verse 44 of “self-realized – seeing God face-to-face” clearly shows that the ones mentioned previously were not “self-realized – seeing God face-to-face,” whom we call sadhakas in Gaudiya Sampradaya.
  - **Sadhaka men brahmana, ksatriya or vaisya can become guru**  
Directly from BS 1.38-41
  - **Sadhaka women sudra or lower cannot become guru**  
Directly from BS 1.42-43
- **By injecting the terms sadhaka and siddha, such discrimination is against Srila Prabhupada**
  - This quote doesn't support the idea of not discriminating levels of devotees, even between sadhaka and siddha because then it runs contrary to hundreds of quotes of Prabhupada himself instructing to differentiate
  - For instance, Nol 5, purport (emphasis mine; see full purport or email for more):  
**In this verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī advises the devotee to be intelligent enough to distinguish between the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī, madhyama-adhikārī and uttama-adhikārī**  
Indeed, the advanced uttama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava devotee should be accepted as a spiritual master....
  - Logical fallacy— A says to B, “don't discriminate.” That means A is discriminating between one who doesn't discriminate and one who discriminates.
  - In the quote supplied by Kalakantha Prabhu, Prabhupada is speaking about issue of his disciple Siddha-svarupa whose sahajiya group was trying to create a faction
  - By the word pure devotee Prabhupada means one who is pure devotee in sadhana stage.  
This is mentioned in Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu (1.2.1): “That pure devotional service (pure devotional service as mentioned before by the verse 1.1.11 as anyābhilāṣitā śūnyam...) rises at three levels: sādhana, bhāva, and prema.”  
Further Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura comments that Bhava and prema are included in siddha stage while sadhana is a sadhana stage.  
This also supports our distinction of sadhana and siddha stages

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 1:08 PM

**[Damodara Dasa](#)**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>,

Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris

Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

One request:

Seeing some misunderstandings in previous email from my usage of phrase "woman cannot initiate" as an absolute prohibition, in my replies it should be understood that whenever I write "women cannot initiate" or such, the it should be understood as including only non-siddha women. If I need to say that no women, either siddha or non-siddha can initiate then I will specify the "absolute" in any of its form; for instance "absolutely no woman can initiate."

It is very difficult otherwise to go on mentioning every time that non-siddha women cannot initiate, etc. Hope you will understand the practicality.

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**Krishna Kirti Das**

Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 1:35 PM

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Kalakantha Prabhu and others. Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I would like to focus one aspect of the discussion you and Damodara Prabhu are having. The excerpt is below is with regard to the difference between sadkha and siddha, as used in our paper.

One thing I think pretty much everyone of us has struggled

with over the last three decades or more is the fact that "pure devotees" who acted in the role of initiating spiritual masters fell down from their positions. Not just a handful but many. For us it was kind of like the spiritual version of the #MeToo movement. At some point it was "raining gurus", and it was an unimaginably unpleasant time for those former disciples who had to go from the shelter of one "pure devotee" to the next in order to somehow stay "connected" to the parampara. Clearly, as a society from top-to-bottom we were not understanding some very fundamental things about the process we were trying to follow. And those misunderstandings include words like "pure", "pure devotee", "liberated", and so forth.

And I also think that many of those who fell down fit the definition of "pure" in the sense that Srila Prabhupada used it in the below quote you cited. Hence, some clearer understanding is required, and for that there are rules that guides us to proper understanding. These are the same rules that our acharyas use, and therefore we should also use them.

In this regard, I have attached a document researched and prepared by Damodara Prabhu that we have been using for our research on the paper we are discussing. It is an introduction to Vedic hermeneutics. And I think many of you may find it informative and useful.

In the next email, what I would like to focus on are the terms sādḥaka and siddha, as we used them, and why we consider them appropriate.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 3:09 PM



**Carl Woodham**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Dear SABHA Members,

Damodara Prabhu is giving long winded replies, as expected.

Here in essence are his points, as I understand them. If he says I am misunderstanding, perhaps he can explain more briefly.

**Sudra men can become brahmans by quality. If they do, they may give diksa. Women cannot become brahmans by quality, because they are born women. But they may become siddha devotees. If they do, they can give diksa. Otherwise not.**

I reiterate: this false assertion is not made in the Bharadwaja Samhita verses quoted. Nor are they found



in any other sastras presented by the authors. Krishna makes no such distinction in the Gita.

Perhaps Damodar Prabhu can explain how can women become siddha devotees without first becoming brahmans. Do they get to skip a grade?

Those of us familiar with the ritvik heresy recognize Damodar's cited quotes encouraging one to accept an uttama-adhikari as one's guru. The same quotes are used by those advocating Gaudiya Math gurus. Now he is applying them to discriminate against women. A male madhyama guru is OK. A female madhyama guru is not.

Damodar Prabhu, who is going to decide who is an uttama and who is a madhyama adhikari? You? Do you have some kind of uttameter?

I have personally known nearly all of Srila Prabhupada's senior disciples. The one I saw displaying the symptoms of bhava most clearly was Yamuna Devi. Many people wanted to take diksa from her, but she was disallowed due to her gender.

This offense to Srila Prabhupada and his 1500 female disciples must stop. The latest GBC committee has approved women giving first initiation. We should support them. SABHA members, please vote against the anonymous nonsense proposal posted by Nrsimhananda Prabhu. I will be presenting a counter-proposal shortly.

Please also note that no SABHA members have offered any anti-VDG input in this thread. Why only these "experts"?

Ys,  
Kd

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 4:50 PM



**[Rukmini Walker](#)**

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa

Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Dear SABHA Members,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I fully support the conclusions drawn by Kalakantha Prabhu in his most recent email. I look forward to receiving his counter proposal, which I intend to support. I hope many of you will add your support as well.

Reading this email thread has brought up many questions for me.

1. Who designated these two "designated spokespersons"?
2. In the paper written on hermeneutics, we are told that Srila Prabhupada gave a new code of dharma, but that dharma is eternal and cannot be manufactured by anyone.... In manufacturing dharma, Srila Prabhupada would then be disconnected from parampara. I find this statement shocking.

We learn from the Mahabharata verse, so often quoted by Srila Prabhupada:

tarko pratistha srutayo vibhinna  
nasav rsir yasya matam na bhinnam  
dharmasya tattvam nihitam guhayam  
mahajano yena gatah sa panthah.

(Mahabharata, Vana-parva 313-117, quoted in CC Madhya Lila 17.186)

Great thinkers- munis and rsis- generally disagree on the conclusions of sastra. But the deep secrets of dharma tattva are hidden in the hearts of the great Mahajans. Therefore, we must follow in the footsteps of the Mahajans.

3. We can discuss ad infinitum offering our logic and understanding of sastra. But in fact, Srila Prabhupada is the great mahajan and senapati guru who crossed the seven oceans and seven seas (going against Vedic aphorisms!) to deliver the essence of Bhakti, the teachings of Lord Caitanya, the essence of all dharma sastras to us and all living beings living in Kali Yuga.

4. Srila Prabhupada offers us the pathway toward attaining prema-bhakti-rasa. At times he would implement something "Vedic" if it would enhance our KC and our path toward this ultimate goal, at times he would reject what is commonly understood as Vedic.

5. Are we to assume, out of our own erudition that anyone of us can understand the secrets of dharma for this age, and how KC should be taught in the future, better than Srila Prabhupada? If what he specifically gave us is a temporary adjustment for this current generation, which one of us would dare to venture onto the shaky ground to try to establish which of his teachings should be accepted and which rejected?

6. If the gayatri diksa initiation received by Srila Prabhupada's Vaisnavi disciples is not authentic, and that in the future gayatri initiation should no longer be given to women, (what to

speak of VDG's) isn't this sectarian understanding a significant change, and most demeaning to the merciful compassion given to us all by Srila Prabhupada?

7. For the followers of Srila Prabhupada to be told that we cannot really understand why Srila Prabhupada did what he did, but that now, going forward, understanding sastra as we do, we must make these changes for the benefit and correct understanding of future generations- this I find most insidious and dangerous to the legacy of Srila Prabhupada's merciful mission, the mission of the all merciful Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

8. And who is to judge who is a siddha, and who is not? Only a true siddha can understand the mentality of another siddha. Vaisnavera kriya-mudra vijne na bujhaya... Srila Prabhupada says that even the wisest man, even a very learned and intelligent scholar cannot understand the mentality of a true Vaisnava. Who would be the one to step forward to judge who is a siddha and who is not?

These are a few of the questions that this discussion has brought up for me. I was initiated fifty years ago by the extraordinary compassion of Srila Prabhupada to one as unqualified as me. I can only pray to remain a fool before my spiritual master, as was taught to me by him, and as exemplified by Lord Caitanya Himself.

I hope others will come forward to see the fallacies of the arguments being presented to us.

Hare Krsna,  
Your servant,  
Rukmini dd

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 4:59 PM



**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

Respected Kalakanta Prabhu,

>> Women cannot become brahmans by quality, because they are born women.

Sorry, if you have misunderstood. Women also can become brahmanas. I don't think I said they can't. But their linga or gender (which is female) doesn't change (neither do the gender of a male devotee change). Bharadvaja-samhita is prohibiting the female gender in its verse 1.42-43.

na jātu mantra-dā nārī...  
"Women cannot become guru"  
etc.

And in the 44th verse, BS says that..  
“But, because perfect yogis who are on the stage of yoga-pratyakṣa (i.e. are self-realized – seeing God face-to-face), may take birth in any family tradition, in such cases no consideration of kula, gender, etc. as mentioned earlier apply.”

The use of "self-realized – seeing God face-to-face," here clearly shows that this is an exception and that the rules which were mentioned in the verses before this verse were applicable for those devotees who are not "self-realized – seeing God face-to-face" whom we technically call sadhaka.

Hope this clarifies.

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 8:03 PM

**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>

Cc: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>,

Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris

Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa

Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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My obeisances to you, Mother Rukmini. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I hope you enjoyed your recent stay here in Delhi, formerly Indraprastha, the capital of the Pandavas.

Some comments on your recent remarks below:

On Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 4:50 PM Rukmini Walker  
<[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)> wrote:

5. Are we to assume, out of our own erudition that anyone of us can understand the secrets of dharma for this age, and how KC should be taught in the future, better than Srila Prabhupada? If what he specifically gave us is a temporary adjustment for this current generation, which one of us would dare to venture onto the shaky ground to try to establish which of his teachings should be accepted and which rejected?

Having FDGs was not one of his teachings -- he didn't institute it. There are statements of SP that apparently condone and reject VDGs -- how to reconcile?

7. For the followers of Srila Prabhupada to be told that we cannot really understand why Srila Prabhupada did what he did, but that now, going forward, understanding sastra as we do, we must make these changes

Instituting VDGs is a change. If it were not, there would not be discussion about it.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 9:31 PM

**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>

To: Rukmini Walker <[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)>

Cc: Carl Woodham <[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>, Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>, David Shapiro <[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>, Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>, Sati devi dasi <[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)>, Krishnarupa Dasi <[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Some more remarks below:

On Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 4:50 PM Rukmini Walker <[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)> wrote:

2. In the paper written on hermeneutics, we are told that Srila Prabhupada gave a new code of dharma, but that dharma is eternal and cannot be manufactured by anyone.... In manufacturing dharma, Srila Prabhupada would then be disconnected from parampara. I find this statement shocking.

A correction is needed to the statement above. The paper on hermeneutics does not say "SP gave a new code of dharma". Our position is that Srila Prabhupada as a siddha always follows śāstra. It may sometimes look like he is not following

shastra, but that is due to our incomplete understanding. Just like the story he related of the snake that his gurudeva ordered to be killed conflicted with religious principles against violence. And later, after Srila Prabhupada read the passage from Srimad-Bhagavatam that affirmed that even a saintly person rejoices when an envious creature is killed, he felt much joy and relief when it was finally revealed to him.

In the same way, we were very happy when we came across the below verse from Nārada Pañcarātra, because they reconciled ALL of the different things that Srila Prabhupada said on the matter.

For example:

||38||

“Thus, one who is desirous of surrendering with faith should take shelter of a guru who is always engaged in chanting the mantra and is a knower of bhakti-siddhānta, is always engaged, without any desire for personal benefit, in showering mercy on fallen souls, who is always pure in heart or free of sins, peaceful, and always committed to his prescribed duties. Such a guru should be the best of the twice-born.

We know from BG 6.42 purport, Srila Prabhupada says:

Birth in a family of *yogīs* or transcendentalists – those with great wisdom – is praised herein because the child born in such a family receives a spiritual impetus from the very beginning of his life. It is especially the case in the *ācārya* or *gosvāmī* families. Such families are very learned and devoted by tradition and training, and thus they become spiritual masters.

So, here Srila Prabhupada is affirming the above verse from Narada Pancaratra, which also says that such people are considered "the best of the twice-born."

||39||

“The best guru of all is a learned brāhmaṇa endowed with good qualities who has taken birth in a sinless lineage of devotee ancestors, traceable up to seven generations.”

As we pointed out in our paper, the guru spoken of here is necessarily a Vaishnava. It is established in an earlier verse (1.15), that the system of yoga being outlined is for taking shelter of the Supreme Lord.

*brahma-kṣatra-viśaḥ sūdrāḥ striyās cāntarajās tathā |  
sarva eva prapadyeran sarva-dhātāram acyutam ||15||*

“Anyone, whether they be *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, *sūdras*, women, *antyaajas*, or anyone else, should, with full faith, take shelter of Lord Acyuta, who is the master of all living entities, through the medium of this yoga.”

||40||

“Even if a twice-born brāhmaṇa happens to have some non-devotees in his family line, or has not been fortunate to take birth in a renowned family of devotees, he nevertheless always deserves to be an ācārya if he is endowed with all good qualities like knowledge and renunciation, is engaged in his prescribed duties, and is steeped in loving devotion to the Lord.”

I hope the above verse is not controversial.

||41||

“On the other hand, one cannot become an ācārya even if one is born in a great family line but is devoid of jñāna, bhakti, good qualities, etc. Also, unless there is an emergency, an ācārya from a lower birth or age should not initiate a person from a higher birth or age.”

The first sentence in the above translation should not be controversial.

The second sentence, however, will be.

As reported by Srila Prabhupada, we find in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa a similar injunction:

"It is stated in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa that one should not accept initiation from a person who is not in the brahminical order if there is a fit person in the brahminical order present." (CC 8.128)

But Srila Prabhupada then Srila Prabhupada makes the following statement:

This instruction is meant for those who are overly dependent on the mundane social order and is suitable for those who want to remain in mundane life.

It seems that Srila Prabhupada is rejecting Srila Sanatana Goswami, finding fault with him. But just as we are not allowed to find fault with Srila Prabhupada, we are not allowed to find fault with Srila Sanatana Goswami. Otherwise, that is a great offense. So the prescription is not adharmā, it is not against religious principles.

However, it is good for a certain class of people. That will be for the neophytes, the kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs: *sa bhakta prakṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*. By definition, they are materialistic devotees. So, this injunction is applicable to them. It is good for them. Why would Srila Sanātana Gosvāmī recommend something that is bad for someone? He would never do that. Therefore we have to assume that this for the spiritual benefit of a certain class of men, not of others.

Now, for those of you who are concerned about the ability of ISKCON to be able to spread more widely, I would like to point out that it is rare for someone to be very serious about Krishna consciousness. Even within ISKCON it is quite literally



remarkable if someone is strictly following. We say, "Oh, he is strict. . .", and that is praise (or sometimes criticism). But it is remarkable.

The fact is that not all persons who come to ISKCON and get initiated are as identically interested in making spiritual advancement as others are. Statistically, the group of very serious people will be small. Now, what do you do with the rest?

[To be continued. . .]

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 11:13 PM

**Bhakti Rasayana Sagar**

<brss108@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Vaisnavas.

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

The most peculiar point for me personally in all the discussions is the definition of who is siddha and who is not. Somehow the stress is on seeing Kṛṣṇa face to face, which is not so easily verifiable and not at all what Srila Prabhupada and Srila Rupa Goswami mostly stressed. They defined Uttama Adhikari as the one who is: **completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others**, ...strictly following all the regulative principles, chanting the prescribed number of rounds on japa beads and always thinking of how to expand the Krishna consciousness movement.

(NOD 5).

Do we want to say that we haven't got any Vaishnavis in ISKCON fitting into these definitions?

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

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Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 11:42 PM

[Krishna Kirti Das](#)

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro  
<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha  
Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS  
(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my  
humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

You wrote,

The most peculiar point for me personally in all the  
discussions is the definition of who is siddha and who is not.  
Somehow the stress is on seeing Kṛṣṇa face to face, which is  
not so easily verifiable and not at all what Srila Prabhupada  
and Srila Rupa Goswami mostly stressed.

But don't you think it is also peculiar that women acting as

ācārya in our lines is also so rare? I mentioned the absence of the name of a woman in the guru-paramparā list in Bhagavad-gītā As It Is. The Caitanya Tree in CC Adi Lila is another. In that list, out of more than 120 names, only two are female, and they don't appear to be in some sort of ācārya-like role.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 12:00 AM



**[Bhakti Rasayana Sagar](#)**

<brss108@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Yes, these are very rare cases and for this reason we've got only very few such Vaishnavis in ISKCON on the whole planet right now. But why do we need to bar them continuously from the service?

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 2:39 AM



[Krishna Kirti Das](#)

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"



<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 12:00 AM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Yes, these are very rare cases and for this reason we've got only very few such Vaishnavis in ISKCON on the whole planet right now. But why do we need to bar them continuously from the service?

I would approach your question first from an historical point of view: Why have female ācāryas always been rare? In this regard there are two possible explanations: there is something in the spiritual tradition (śāstra, ācāryas, sadācāra, etc.) that makes it so (and is by definition bona fide), or there is something *against* the spiritual tradition preventing women from participating in equal numbers (and is by definition *not* bona fide). In the latter case, you would have to argue that the non-bona fide thing in the spiritual tradition that has been holding women back has been extant pretty much with the religion itself, and that would implicate the ācāryas and the śāstras in perpetrating irreligious acts.

Now, we can say, OK, women, *because they are women*, generally don't go for this because women generally don't do jobs like hauling garbage, or the like. They would rather be teaching 1st graders. And we explain the rarity of female garbage haulers in terms of preferences born out of one's material conditioning, or material *svabhāva*.



But then we say, "However, there *are* some women that prefer to haul garbage and would excel at it if given the chance. They are very rare, but we still want to give them a chance because we believe that everyone should be allowed to act according to their God-given propensities and thereby benefit society. God wouldn't have made her expert in hauling garbage rather than teaching 1st graders if He (or she?) had not given her a talent for hauling garbage. So, let her haul garbage."

Now, here is the problem: *the śāstras say that just because we have some propensity to do some particular duty doesn't mean we should be doing it.* In Bhagavad-gītā (18.46), Kṛṣṇa calls this *paradharma*, which is defined as the practice of religious principles meant for another (or that one is not fit for). Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this in terms of a kṣātriya wanting to practice non-violence like a brāhmaṇa is improper, which is one of the reasons why Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself gave repeatedly to Arjuna to fight. And the Lord even says that it is better to do one's own duty (sva-dharma) though full of faults than another's perfectly (BG 18.47). And the reason he gives is that such duties are not touched by sin.

This last point of one's own prescribed duties (svadharma) not being touched by sin is very important when considering whether one is eligible to take up the duties of an ācārya, or dīkṣā-guru. Someone may say, a spiritual master is completely transcendental, but what if *you* aren't completely transcendental? What if you are only 99% transcendental and still have 1% material conditioning? Does it sound like the situation of the vast majority of gurus in ISKCON, if not all of them? I think that's accurate. And the women who are being considered now for becoming ācārya are most likely in that category, too. They may be very good devotees otherwise, but they are still *māyā-kavalita*, or still practicing bhakti while under the influence of the material energy.

Hence, in order to act as ācārya, one must do so according to the particular *vidhi*, or rules and regulations, that one is fit to follow. That is, one must perform one's svadharma prescribed according to his, or her, svabhāva.

Now, there are two vidhis we follow in ISKCON. One is the bhāgavata-vidhi, and the other is the pāñcarātrika-vidhi, and by either vidhi, one can be a dīkṣā-guru, provided one is qualified. If you are someone like Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, then you can give dīkṣā in whatever way you want. You are a mahābhāgavata who is beyond the rules of the Vedic injunctions. You are the exception, the "very special case."

But if you are not, then you have to follow the *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*, because you are not fully free of the effects of material nature, and the *pañcarātras* give the rules that one has to follow in order to act as a bona fide dīkṣā-guru *while still acting under the influence of the material nature*. Now, as far as *Nārada Pañcarātra* is concerned, it does prohibit women from acting as ācārya, or dīkṣā-guru, as long as they are not at the level of yogapratyakṣā-nāthānam, or seeing God face-to-face. It's not an absolute prohibition against women, but it's there nonetheless, so we have to follow it.

And we have to follow it because our ācārya Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established pāñcarātrika-vidhi for initiations for our disciplic succession. None of us don't have any choice about it, unless one truly is in the exceptional category stipulated by *Nārada Pañcarātra*.

Now, one can say, "Well, I'm going to follow what Śrīla Prabhupāda said, I don't care for this or that śāstra." But he said we should follow the śāstras, and he quite consciously subordinated himself to them and expected his students to do so. Śrīla Prabhupāda makes it very clear in CC 20.352 purport that we act according to śāstra.

If someone thinks that both Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions and śāstra are opposed to each other in some circumstances, then his (or her) information about the matter is incomplete, much as how Śrīla Prabhupāda said he held some doubt regarding SBSST's ordering a snake to be killed until he read the famous passage in the Bhāgavatam about how a saintly person rejoices when a snake is killed.

So, in the same way, when we came across these verses in Nārada Pañcarātra, we saw that they nicely explain why female ācāryas are so rare. It was like finding the missing piece of a puzzle. They must at least be on the stage of bhāva. And we know from Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu that bhāva-bhakti is extremely rare. Thus it is no coincidence that female ācāryas in our line have been extremely rare.

Now, if those verses are not accepted, then one quite simply does not have a pramāṇa from śāstra to explain their rarity. Being ācārya, is not a prescribed duty for non-siddha women, because their svabhava one of our pūrvācāryas have decided we should follow pañcarātri-vidhi. Otherwise, they will not be able to act as ācārya without incurring sin. That is pratikula for bhakti, not anukula.

Your servant, Kṛṣṇā-kīrti Dāsa

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:31 AM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha  
Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS  
(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my  
humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 12:00 AM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Yes, these are very rare cases and for this reason we've got  
only very few such Vaishnavis in ISKCON on the whole planet  
right now. But why do we need to bar them continuously from  
the service?

This seems relevant:

When Gandhari came to know that her future husband was a

blind man, to follow her life companion she decided to become voluntarily blind. So she wrapped up her eyes with many silk linens, and she was married to Dhrtarastra under the guidance of her elder brother Sakuni. She was the most beautiful girl of her time, and she was equally qualified by her womanly qualities, which endeared her to every member of the Kaurava court. But despite all her good qualities, she had the **natural frailties of a woman**, and she was envious of Kunti when the latter gave birth to a male child. Both the queens were pregnant, but Kunti first gave birth to a male child. Thus Gandhari became angry and gave a blow to her own abdomen.

>>> Ref. VedaBase => SB 1.13.3, SB 1.13.4, SB 1.13.3-4

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:34 AM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Also relevant -- a highly unpopular quote, but it is direct from SP.

Here is a difference between male and female that exists even in the higher statuses of life -- in fact, even between Lord Siva and his wife. Lord Siva could understand Citraketu very nicely, but Parvati could not. Thus even in the higher statuses of life there is a difference between the understanding of a male and that of a female. It may be clearly said that the understanding of a woman is always inferior to the understanding of a man. In the Western countries there is now agitation to the effect that man and woman should be considered equal, but from this verse it appears that woman is always less intelligent than man.

>>> Ref. VedaBase => SB 6.17.34, SB 6.17.35, SB 6.17.34-35

It seems this would also account for women being rare or exceptional as ācāryas.



Ys, KKdas

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 9:12 AM



**[pancaratnadas](#)**

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,

janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Sabha Members

It was mentioned that only two were giving replies against VDG and it is supposed to mean something, but I know most are like me and happy to read the questions and are enjoying the Sastra and convincing replies.

I must thank Krishna Kirti Prabhu and Damodara Prabhu for giving us their time and understanding, I am certainly more convinced that VDG is a rarity. Not that there will be no VDG but that it is a rarity.

We must not make the exception into the rule. It is always better to make the rule strong to maintain the integrity of Prabhupada and his movement and that is not an offense. But if we, out of good reason or sentiment, make those very special exceptions into the rule then we open the whole system to much wider interpretation and a weakening of our standards, which greatly effects in places like India.

Our GBC always have the right and the power to recognise any real exceptional devotee, someone who stands out as exceptional to everyone in all respects and if they feel, they may easily make the exception, as we saw Srila Prabhupada do in other circumstances.

But that should be an exception in an exceptional case, it must not be the rule. Not only is this from a practical point of view but we are seeing it is also Sastra.

Tomorrow I will write something from Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur that he has to say on the topic which is perhaps a bit more authoritative.

Your servant pancaratna dasa

Sent from my MI MAX 2

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 10:09 AM

**David Shapiro**

&lt;nrsimhananda@gmail.com&gt;

To: pancaratnadas &lt;pancaratnadas@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Isn't the "exception" issue the same one that the GBC are struggling with in regards to disciples initiating while their spiritual master is still present. The GBC halted more approvals because it was becoming the "rule." Isn't this the essential issue in both the VDG discussion and the one which Rukmini dd has placed before this august body? Now Pancaratna prabhu has articulated this distinction. I am also looking at this problem of precept/practice. This is also reminiscent of the

Krishna West philosophy versus the orthodoxy as understood by what has been the "established order." I am interested in knowing which direction is in harmony with guru, sadhu, shastra. Where it falls - if it falls - is a fruit that is not mine. Nevertheless, I am forced to chose, and I am keenly listening and questioning. Please actively join the discussion. We can learn from one another. Let me say for all to hear: "I don't know for sure. I'm torn. I'd like us all to be equal, but scriptures speaks contrary to that idea from what I can see. Does my heart resonate with that? Well, my heart is impure, it is covered by the four defects. I get confused. Then it seems clear. Then someone brings up something that I haven't considered. This is a process. I am expressing my vulnerability so that anyone else can perhaps feel comfortable with theirs. This discussion is exciting because new information from the transcendental realm is being presented, sometimes realized. It's quite a party. I wish that I were more intelligent.

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 10:53 AM



**[Damodara Dasa](#)**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti

Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Below are short **quotes** from SB 7th canto relating to **Para-dharma as sinful or a type of Adharma**:

This is in support of Krishna-kirti Prabhu's recent email. Note that para-dharma is duty prescribed for others and doing this is adharma. This means that even if one is nicely performing his own duties, one should not imitate duties of others without being adharmik.

Your servant,  
damodara das

#### SB 7.15.12

*vidharmaḥ para-dharmaś ca ābhāsa upamā chalaḥ  
adharmā-śākhāḥ pañcemā dharmā-jṣo 'dharmavat tyajet*

#### SYNONYMS

vidharmaḥ—irreligion; para-dharmaḥ—religious principles practiced by others; ca—and; ābhāsaḥ—pretentious religious principles; upamā—principles that appear religious but are not; chalaḥ—a cheating religion; adharmā-śākhāḥ—which are different branches of irreligion; pañca—five; imāḥ—these; dharmā-jṣo—one who is aware of religious principles; adharmā-vat—accepting them as irreligious; tyajet—should give up.

#### TRANSLATION

There are five branches of irreligion, appropriately known as irreligion [vidharma], religious principles for which one is unfit [para-dharma], pretentious religion [ābhāsa], analogical religion [upadharmā] and cheating religion [chala-dharma]. One who is aware of real religious life must abandon these five as irreligious.

#### SB 7.15.13

*dharmā-bādho vidharmaḥ syāt para-dharmo 'nya-coditaḥ  
upadharmas tu pākhaṇḍo dambho vā śabda-bhic chalaḥ*

#### SYNONYMS



dharma-bādhah—obstructs the execution of one's own religious principles; vidharmaḥ—against the principles of religion; syāt—should be; **para-dharmaḥ—imitating religious systems for which one is unfit; anya-coditaḥ— which is introduced by someone else;** upadharmah—concocted religious principles; tu—indeed; pākhaṇḍah—by one who is against the principles of Vedas, standard scriptures; dambhaḥ—who is falsely proud; vā—or; śabda-bhit—by word jugglery; chalah— a cheating religious system.

#### TRANSLATION

Religious principles that obstruct one from following his own religion are called vidharma. **Religious principles introduced by others are called para-dharma.** A new type of religion created by one who is falsely proud and who opposes the principles of the Vedas is called upadharmah. And interpretation by one's jugglery of words is called chalah-dharma.

#### PURPORT

**To create a new type of dharma has become fashionable in this age.** So-called svāmīs and yogīs support that one may follow any type of religious system, according to one's own choice, because all systems are ultimately the same. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, however, such fashionable ideas are called vidharma because they go against one's own religious system.

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 10:59 AM



**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti

Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das



<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Also to be NOTED.

Verse Man-manā bhava mad-bhakto... appears twice in  
Bhagavad-gītā (9.34 & 18.65)

The only other verse that appears twice in Bhagavad-gītā is  
... the one on PARA-DHARMA (Bg 3.35 & 18.47)

**śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt**

**sva-dharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ**

It is better to engage in one's own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another's occupation and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one's nature are never affected by sinful reactions. (3.35)

**śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt**

**svabhāva-niyataṁ karma kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam**

It is better to engage in one's own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another's occupation and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one's nature are never affected by sinful reactions. (18.47)

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 11:49 AM

**[Mahaman Das](#)**

<mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"  
<Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net>, "..."  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa  
<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro  
<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi  
<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Sabha members and others on this thread.

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All Glories to Srila Prabhupad!

My two cents worth:

1) I found Kalakantha Prabhu's referring to Nrisimhananda Prabhu's proposal as 'nonsense' rather rude, and intimidating, and not maintaining the decorum of this August discussion. He and others may not agree or support this proposal and certainly they are entitled to this and can vote against. But everyone should please realise there are many supporters and dissenters on this divisive issue.

2) Nrsimhananda Prabhu in his response to the probability math of Krishna Kirti Prabhu has made a very nice point that there could have been gurus of either gender who are not included in the list as given by SBSST.

3) I am just curious to know that even in the presence of Srila Prabhupad, there were many highly qualified Vaisnavis. Yet the 11 persons Srila Prabhupad selected ( be they ritviks as some claim , or regular gurus) were all male.

I would like to be enlightened whether this can have any bearing on the discussion.

Supporters of either view or neutral may respond.

4) Krishna Kirti Prabhu in one of his posts said that “instituting VDG is a change. Otherwise there would not be discussion about it.” Quite interesting.

Thanking you,  
Ys,  
Mahaman Das

Sent from my iPad

> On 08-Jan-2019, at 8:31 AM, Krishna Kirti Das  
([krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)) <[mailer@pamho.net](mailto:mailer@pamho.net)> wrote:

>

> Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my humble obeisances.

> All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

>

> On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 12:00 AM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>

> wrote:

>

>> Yes, these are very rare cases and for this reason we've got only very few

>> such Vaishnavis in ISKCON on the whole planet right now.  
But why do we need  
>> to bar them continuously from the service?  
>>  
>  
> This seems relevant:  
>  
> When Gandhari came to know that her future husband was a  
blind man, to  
> follow her life companion she decided to become voluntarily  
blind. So she  
> wrapped up her eyes with many silk linens, and she was  
married to  
> Dhrtarastra under the guidance of her elder brother Sakuni.  
She was the  
> most beautiful girl of her time, and she was equally qualified  
by her  
> womanly qualities, which endeared her to every member of  
the Kaurava court.  
> But despite all her good qualities, she had the \*natural  
frailties of a  
> woman\*, and she was envious of Kunti when the latter gave  
birth to a male  
> child. Both the queens were pregnant, but Kunti first gave  
birth to a male  
> child. Thus Gandhari became angry and gave a blow to her  
own abdomen.  
>  
>>>> Ref. VedaBase => SB 1.13.3, SB 1.13.4, SB 1.13.3-4  
>  
>  
>  
>  
>  
>  
>  
>>  
>> Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

>>

>> On 7 Jan 2019, at 21:12, Krishna Kirti Das  
<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

>>

>> Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my  
humble obeisances.

>> All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

>>

>> You wrote,

>>

>> The most peculiar point for me personally in all the  
discussions is the

>>> definition of who is siddha and who is not. Somehow the  
stress is on seeing

>>> Krsna face to face, which is not so easily verifiable and not  
at all what

>>> Srila Prabhupada and Srila Rupa Goswami mostly  
stressed.

>>

>>

>> But don't you think it is also peculiar that women acting as  
acarya in our

>> lines is also so rare? I mentioned the absence of the name  
of a woman in

>> the guru-parampara list in Bhagavad-gita As It Is. The  
Caitanya Tree in CC

>> Adi Lila is another. In that list, out of more than 120  
names, only two are

>> female, and they don't appear to be in some sort of acarya-  
like role.

>>

>> Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

>>

>> On Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 11:13 PM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>

>> wrote:

>>

>>> Dear Vaisnavas.

>>> Please accept my humble obeisances.

>>> All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

>>>

>>> The most peculiar point for me personally in all the discussions is the

>>> definition of who is siddha and who is not. Somehow the stress is on seeing

>>> Krsna face to face, which is not so easily verifiable and not at all what

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 1:00 PM

**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com

Cc: carlwoodham@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com, brss108@gmail.com,

suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,

divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,

Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com,

Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com,

pancaratnadas@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com,

askindredspirits@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com,

janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com,

vrnda16@icloud.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com

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Damodara Prabhu,

Regarding Suniti, my assumption is that in the times Suniti lived women did not take diksa, which of course they did at later times. Do you have any historical evidence that the society Suniti lived in offered women diksa?

If so, I stand to be corrected. However, I would also be interested in knowing if any woman in those times, could give diksa. If the answer is no, and knowing that in subsequent times some women did give diksa, then wouldn't it be logical to assume she couldn't give diksa because no women in that time in history were allowed to give diksa and that if Suniti lived, say 500 years ago, and was qualified, she could give diksa? Thus, being a woman in those times was a disqualification.

If woman were allowed to give diksa, then using your understaing , it would mean Suniti couldn't give, not only because she was Dhruva's mother, but because she was not a liberated woman. So even if we can't prove woman in that culture could or could



not take diksa or give diksa, let's assume they could for the sake of argument so i can explain the problem I have in applying this to today's situation.

The problem I have is that Srila Prabhupada said his female disciples could also be guru, yet he didn't specify separate qualifications for men and woman. Again, if this is indeed what he meant, it is strange that he didn't *clearly* spell this out, but left us with the Suniti verse as evidence from which to figure this out (and he didn't mention anything about women initiating in Iskcon in that purport, which as I said was *the perfect* place to mention it if indeed non liberated women initiating was not what he wanted).

I fear being over intelligent in coming to conclusions not clearly stated by Srila Prabhupada and I suspect many others have this same concern. There are incidents during Prabhupada's times when devotees came to "logical conclusions," based on Prabhupada's books, for which they were corrected or reprimanded by Srila Prabhupada. So we are not just dealing with logic or sastra pramana; we are also dealing with an understanding of how Prabhupada wanted his movement to go forward and historical evidence of how he dealt with and engaged woman.

It is amazing that to answer a direct question such type of “injunction” is used that creates uncertainty in understanding of the view. What is the purpose of creating this misunderstanding while answering a direct question? Why do you say, “all women cannot initiate” while meaning “only siddha women can initiate”? Could you please kindly explain the purpose of using such figures of speech in this exact situation?

DD Reply:

Yes. I thought it would be obvious to the members involved after they have already read the paper. But I was wrong and thus clarified it as my answer to the question when specifically asked. I was not of the intention of creating some confusion. I will try to be more cautious in future.

Also I request to focus on the subject matter; after all, intentions are not always judged by words only. I hope members will understand this. My first language is not English and thus you may

find some errors in my English presentation but I hope you will excuse me considering me you child and also considering SB 1.5.10.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

On 1/6/19, Sati devi dasi <[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)> wrote:

> Dear SABHA members, and honorable guests,  
> please accept my humble obeisance  
> All glory to Srila Prabhupada!  
>  
> Dear Damodara prabhu, thank you for taking your time to kindly explain your  
> position on the topic.  
> Sincerely hope that you will find time to reply to my tiny question and  
> other questions to come and really appreciate this.  
> Quote:  
>  
> \*Damodara Das Reply\*  
>  
> \*Thankyou for pointing this out. Yes. I didn't mean all women cannot  
> initiate, but that non-siddha women cannot initiate. This is normal mode of  
> speech many times used in sastras and is called āmra-vana-nyāya or the  
> logic of the mango forest. When I say that "this is a mango forest," I do  
> not mean that there are no other trees in it but that vast majority of  
> trees are mango trees. Thus when an injunction is given that "woman cannot

> initiate” it means that vast majority of women cannot initiate. This vast  
> majority are the non-siddha women. That’s the established rule.\*  
>  
> My question:  
>  
> It is amazing that to answer a direct question such type of “injunction” is  
> used that creates uncertainty in understanding of the view. What is the  
> purpose of creating this misunderstanding while answering a direct  
> question? Why do you say, “all women cannot initiate” while meaning “only  
> siddha women can initiate”? Could you please kindly explain the purpose of  
> using such figures of speech in this exact situation?  
>  
> Looking forward to your reply,  
>  
> ys Sati dd  
>  
>  
> On Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 11:42 AM Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>  
> wrote:  
>  
>> Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
>> Please accept my humble obeisances,  
>> Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
>> All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.  
>>  
>> Please see my reply to Mahatma Prabhu's inquiries below. Please forgive  
>> me

>> for long reply, but trying to make the points very clear  
minimizing the  
>> words did not work for me. Apologies for any  
inconvenience or offenses.  
>>  
>> Thankyou,  
>> Your servant,  
>> damodara das  
>>

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 2:44 PM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com

Cc: askindredspirits@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
damodara.bvks@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
sati.bts@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,  
pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Regarding the quotation below of men always having superior intelligence, Prabhupada didn't regularly apply this idea/principle to devotee woman. In addition, we know from our sastras that the less intelligent do not surrender to Krsna. So from this perspective, females who surrender are more intelligent than men who do not, and thus we can also conclude that the intelligence of female devotees is always better than male non devotees. If this were not the case, we would have to ban woman from preaching/teaching men, on the plea that their intelligence is always inferior. So we need to insure we are applying Prabhupada's wisdom in the same way that he applied it. Otherwise, we will come to conclusions about what he said that contradict his own actions (and other assertions).

I think this is where the controversy/division lies regarding the sastric "proofs" we are discussing here. For example, we have

seen some women give better classes than some men. So if their intelligence is always inferior, this should not or could not happen. So when we quote sastra without corroborating our experience to edify those references, merely quoting may not necessarily prove one's point.

In a message dated 1/8/2019 8:35:20 AM India Standard Time, [krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com) writes:

Also relevant -- a highly unpopular quote, but it is direct from SP.

Here is a difference between male and female that exists even in the higher statuses of life -- in fact, even between Lord Siva and his wife. Lord Siva could understand Citraketu very nicely, but Parvati could not. Thus even in the higher statuses of life there is a difference between the understanding of a male and that of a female. It may be clearly said that the understanding of a woman is always inferior to the understanding of a man. In the Western countries there is now agitation to the effect that man and woman should be considered equal, but from this verse it appears that woman is always less intelligent than man.

>>> Ref. VedaBase => SB 6.17.34, SB 6.17.35, SB 6.17.34-35

It seems this would also account for women being rare or exceptional as ācāryas.

Ys, KKdas

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:31 AM Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 12:00 AM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Yes, these are very rare cases and for this reason we've

got only very few such Vaishnavis in ISKCON on the whole planet right now. But why do we need to bar them continuously from the service?

This seems relevant:

When Gandhari came to know that her future husband was a blind man, to follow her life companion she decided to become voluntarily blind. So she wrapped up her eyes with many silk linens, and she was married to Dhrtarastra under the guidance of her elder brother Sakuni. She was the most beautiful girl of her time, and she was equally qualified by her womanly qualities, which endeared her to every member of the Kaurava court. But despite all her good qualities, she had the **natural frailties of a woman**, and she was envious of Kunti when the latter gave birth to a male child. Both the queens were pregnant, but Kunti first gave birth to a male child. Thus Gandhari became angry and gave a blow to her own abdomen.

>>> Ref. VedaBase => SB 1.13.3, SB 1.13.4, SB 1.13.3-4

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 2:50 PM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: pancaratnadas@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com

Cc: askindredspirits@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com,



damodara.bvks@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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From what I have seen, female diksa gurus will naturally be the exception, so in a sense we don't have to control the rarity of that service for women. For example, if we now allow women to initiate I am only aware of one woman who might ask to do it (because she has many devotees asking her for initiation).

In a message dated 1/8/2019 9:14:from 18 AM India Standard Time, [pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com) writes:

Dear Sabha Members

It was mentioned that only two were giving replies against VDG and it is supposed to mean something, but I know most are like me and happy to read the questions and are enjoying the Sastra and convincing replies.

I must thank Krishna Kirti Prabhu and Damodara Prabhu for giving us their time and understanding, I am certainly more convinced that VDG is a rarity. Not that there will be no VDG but that it is a rarity.

We must not make the exception into the rule. It is always better to make the rule strong to maintain the integrity of Prabhupada and his movement and that is not an offense. But if we, out of good reason or sentiment, make those very special exceptions into the rule then we open the whole system to much wider interpretation and a

weakening of our standards, which greatly effects in places like India.

Our GBC always have the right and the power to recognise any real exceptional devotee, someone who stands out as exceptional to everyone in all respects and if they feel, they may easily make the exception, as we saw Srila Prabhupada do in other circumstances.

But that should be an exception in an exceptional case, it must not be the rule. Not only is this from a practical point of view but we are seeing it is also Sastra.

Tomorrow I will write something from Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur that he has to say on the topic which is perhaps a bit more authoritative.

Your servant pancaratna dasa

Sent from my MI MAX 2

On 8 Jan 2019 2:39 am, Krishna Kirti Das

<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 12:00 AM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Yes, these are very rare cases and for this reason we've got only very few such Vaishnavis in ISKCON on the whole planet right now. But why do we need to bar them continuously from the service?

I would approach your question first from an historical point of view: Why have female ācāryas always been rare?

In this regard there are two possible explanations: there is something in the spiritual tradition (śāstra, ācāryas, sadācāra, etc.) that makes it so (and is by definition bona fide), or there is something *against* the spiritual tradition preventing women from participating in equal numbers (and is by definition *not* bona fide). In the latter case, you would have to argue that the non-bona fide thing in the spiritual tradition that has been holding women back has been extant pretty much with the religion itself, and that would implicate the ācāryas and the śāstras in perpetrating irreligious acts.

Now, we can say, OK, women, *because they are women*, generally don't go for this because women generally don't do jobs like hauling garbage, or the like. They would rather be teaching 1st graders. And we explain the rarity of female garbage haulers in terms of preferences born out of one's material conditioning, or material *svabhāva*.

But then we say, "However, there *are* some women that prefer to haul garbage and would excel at it if given the chance. They are very rare, but we still want to give them a chance because we believe that everyone should be allowed to act according to their God-given propensities and thereby benefit society. God wouldn't have made her expert in hauling garbage rather than teaching 1st graders if He (or she?) had not given her a talent for hauling garbage. So, let her haul garbage."

Now, here is the problem: *the śāstras say that just because we have some propensity to do some particular duty doesn't mean we should be doing it.* In Bhagavad-gītā (18.46), Kṛṣṇa calls this *paradharma*, which is defined as the practice of religious principles meant for another (or that one is not fit for). Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this in terms of a kṣātriya wanting to practice non-violence like a brāhmaṇa is improper, which is one of the reasons why

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself gave repeatedly to Arjuna to fight. And the Lord even says that it is better to do one's own duty (sva-dharma) though full of faults than another's perfectly (BG 18.47). And the reason he gives is that such duties are not touched by sin.

This last point of one's own prescribed duties (svadharma) not being touched by sin is very important when considering whether one is eligible to take up the duties of an ācārya, or dīkṣā-guru. Someone may say, a spiritual master is completely transcendental, but what if *you* aren't completely transcendental? What if you are only 99% transcendental and still have 1% material conditioning? Does it sound like the situation of the vast majority of gurus in ISKCON, if not all of them? I think that's accurate. And the women who are being considered now for becoming ācārya are most likely in that category, too. They may be very good devotees otherwise, but they are still *māyā-kavalita*, or still practicing bhakti while under the influence of the material energy.

Hence, in order to act as ācārya, one must do so according to the particular *vidhi*, or rules and regulations, that one is fit to follow. That is, one must perform one's svadharma prescribed according to his, or her, svabhāva.

Now, there are two vidhis we follow in ISKCON. One is the bhāgavata-vidhi, and the other is the pāñcarātriaka-vidhi, and by either vidhi, one can be a dīkṣā-guru, provided one is qualified. If you are someone like Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, then you can give dīkṣā in whatever way you want. You are a mahābhāgavata who is beyond the rules of the Vedic injunctions. You are the exception, the "very special case."

But if you are not, then you have to follow the *pāñcarātriaka-vidhi*, because you are not fully free of the

effects of material nature, and the *pañcarātras* give the rules that one has to follow in order to act as a bona fide dīkṣā-guru *while still acting under the influence of he material nature*. Now, as far as *Nārada Pañcarātra* is concerned, it does prohibit women from acting as *ācārya*, or dīkṣā-guru, as long as they are not at the level of yogapratyakṣā-nāthānam, or seeing God face-to-face. It's not an absolute prohibition against women, but it's there nonetheless, so we have to follow it.

And we have to follow it because our ācārya Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established *pañcarātrika-vidhi* for initiations for our disciplic succession. None of us don't have any choice about it, unless one truly is in the exceptional category stipulated by *Nārada Pañcarātra*.

Now, one can say, "Well, I'm going to follow what Śrīla Prabhupāda said, I don't care for this or that śāstra." But he said we should follow the śāstras, and he quite consciously subordinated himself to them and expected his students to do so. Śrīla Prabhupāda makes it very clear in CC 20.352 purport that we act according to śāstra.

If someone thinks that both Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions and śāstra are opposed to each other in some circumstances, then his (or her) information about the matter is incomplete, much as how Śrīla Prabhupāda said he held some doubt regarding SBSST's ordering a snake to be killed until he read the famous passage in the Bhāgavatam about how a saintly person rejoices when a snake is killed.

So, in the same way, when we came across these verses in *Nārada Pañcarātra*, we saw that they nicely explain why female ācāryas are so rare. It was like finding the missing piece of a puzzle. They must at least be on the stage of

bhāva. And we know from Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu that bhāva-bhakti is extremely rare. Thus it is no coincidence that female ācāryas in our line have been extremely rare.

Now, if those verses are not accepted, then one quite simply does not have a pramāṇa from śāstra to explain their rareity. Being ācārya, is not a prescribed duty for non-siddha women, because their svabhava one of our pūrvācāryas have decided we should follow pāñcarātrika-vidhi. Otherwise, they will not be able to act as ācārya without incurring sin. That is pratikula for bhakti, not anukula.

Your servant, Kṛṣṇā-kīrti Dāsa

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 3:03 PM

 **[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com

Cc: pancaratnadas@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com,

brss108@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com,

ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,

bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com,

BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com,

dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com,

Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com,

mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,

mahatmadasa@gmail.com, ruciradas@gmail.com,



siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Regarding performing one's duties, the question is, at least in my mind, what is the duty Prabhupada wanted for advanced female preachers. So although sastric evidence is, of course important and considered, we don't want to use such evidence to obscure Prabhupada wishes. Again, and sorry if I am redundant, but I have not seen opponents of non liberated female gurus adequately/convincingly deal with Prabhupada's direct and clear assertion that he wants all his disciples to be gurus, both male and female, and "*this will please him and Krsna very much.*" Looking at it from this perspective, we need to be cautious about placing restrictions on senior female disciples that Prabhupada himself did not directly and specifically endorse. It is an offence to restrict a capable devotee from a service they are able and willing to do, and I would argue it is an offense of sorts to their aspiring disciples to interfere in their relationship with their siksa guru by not allowing them the privilege of taking diksa from their the guru of their choice.

In a message dated 1/8/2019 10:59:49 AM India Standard Time, [damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com) writes:

Also to be NOTED.

Verse Man-manā bhava mad-bhakto... appears twice in Bhagavad-gītā (9.34 & 18.65)

The only other verse that appears twice in Bhagavad-gītā is ... the one on PARA-DHARMA (Bg 3.35 & 18.47)

śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt

sva-dharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ

It is better to engage in one's own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another's occupation and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one's nature are never affected by sinful reactions. (3.35)

śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt

svabhāva-niyataṁ karma kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam

It is better to engage in one's own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another's occupation and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one's nature are never affected by sinful reactions. (18.47)

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 10:53 AM Damodara Dasa  
<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)> wrote:

Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Below are short **quotes** from SB 7th canto relating to **Para-dharma as sinful or a type of Adharma:**

This is in support of Krishna-kirti Prabhu's recent email. Note that para-dharma is duty prescribed for others and doing this is adharmā. This means that even if one is nicely performing his own duties, one should not imitate duties of others without being adharmik.

Your servant,  
damodara das

### SB 7.15.12

*vidharmaḥ para-dharmaś ca ābhāsa upamā chalaḥ  
adharmā-śākhāḥ paṣcemā dharmā-jṣo 'dharmavat tyajet*

### SYNONYMS

vidharmaḥ—irreligion; **para-dharmaḥ—religious principles practiced by others;** ca—and; ābhāsaḥ—pretentious religious principles; upamā—principles that appear religious but are not; chalaḥ—a cheating religion; adharmā-śākhāḥ—which are different branches of irreligion; pañca—five; imāḥ—these; dharmā-jñāḥ—one who is aware of religious principles; adharmā-vat—accepting them as irreligious; tyajet—should give up.

### TRANSLATION

**There are five branches of irreligion**, appropriately known as irreligion [vidharma], **religious principles for which one is unfit [para-dharma]**, pretentious religion [ābhāsa], analogical religion [upadharmā] and cheating religion [chala-dharma]. One who is aware of real religious life must abandon these five as irreligious.

### SB 7.15.13

*dharmā-bādho vidharmaḥ syāt para-dharmo 'nya-coditaḥ  
upadharmas tu pākhaṇḍo dambho vā śabda-bhic chalaḥ*

### SYNONYMS

dharmā-bādhaḥ—obstructs the execution of one's own religious principles; vidharmaḥ—against the principles of religion; syāt—should be; **para-dharmaḥ—imitating religious systems for which one is unfit; anya-coditaḥ—which is introduced by someone else;** upadharmāḥ—concocted religious principles; tu—indeed; pākhaṇḍaḥ—by one who is against the principles of Vedas, standard scriptures; dambhaḥ—who is falsely proud; vā—or; śabda-bhit—by word jugglery; chalaḥ—a cheating religious system.

### TRANSLATION

Religious principles that obstruct one from following his own religion are called vidharma. **Religious principles introduced by others are called para-dharma.** A new type of religion created by one who is falsely proud and who opposes the principles of the Vedas is called upadharmā. And interpretation by one's jugglery of words is called chala-dharma.

### PURPORT

**To create a new type of dharma has become fashionable in this age.** So-called svāmī and yogīs support that one may follow any type of religious system, according to one's own choice, because all systems are ultimately the same. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, however, such fashionable ideas are called vidharma because they go against one's own religious system.

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 10:09 AM David Shapiro

<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

Isn't the "exception" issue the same one that the GBC are struggling with in regards to disciples initiating while their spiritual master is still present. The GBC halted more approvals because it was becoming the "rule." Isn't this the essential issue in both the VDG discussion and the one which Rukmini dd has placed before this august body? Now Pancaratna prabhu has articulated this distinction. I am also looking at this problem of precept/practice. This is also reminiscent of the Krishna West philosophy versus the orthodoxy as understood by what has been the "established order." I am interested in knowing which direction is in harmony with guru, sadhu, shastra. Where it falls - if it falls - is a fruit that is not mine. Nevertheless, I am forced to chose, and I am keenly listening and questioning. Please actively join the discussion. We can learn from one another. Let me say for all to hear: "I don't know for sure. I'm torn. I'd like us all to be equal, but scriptures speaks contrary to that idea from what I can see. Does my heart resonate with that? Well, my heart is impure, it is covered by the four defects. I get confused. Then it seems clear. Then someone brings up something that I haven't considered. This is a process. I am expressing my vulnerability so that anyone else can perhaps feel comfortable with theirs. This discussion is exciting because new information from the transcendental realm is being presented, sometimes realized. It's quite a party. I wish that I were more intelligent.

On Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 7:44 PM pancaratnadas  
<[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)> wrote:

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 4:49 PM



**Damodara Dasa**

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>

To: Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>

Cc: Sati devi dasi <[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)>, Carl Woodham

<[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA"

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>,  
Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami  
<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara  
Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris  
Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa  
Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Respected Mahatma Prabhu,

My reply below in red:

Your servant,  
damodara das

Regarding Suniti, my assumption is that in the times Suniti lived women did not take diksa, which of course they did at later times. Do you have any historical evidence that the society Suniti lived in offered women diksa?

There seems no reason to assume any reason behind why Suniti was prohibited from giving diksa and then try to defeat that reason.

**Srila Prabhupada has already mentioned the reason and that is "being a woman."** Thus being a woman is in and off itself a reason if we are to take Srila Prabhupada seriously. And this reason is supported by sastras also (Nārada-pañcarātra, Bhāradvāja-samhitā, 1.42-43)—

**na jātu mantra-dā nārī...**

Women cannot give dīkṣā

&

**nāharhantyaścāryatām kvacit...**

Never deserves to take the position of ācārya.

So according to Srila Prabhupada, sastras and Vedic tradition do not allow women to become diksa-guru.

I think first we should make this point clear, then we can discuss if it is applicable today or not, practicalities, considering Time Place Circumstances etc.

Also how Prabhupada acted in different Time place and circumstance, etc can be discussed once we are clear what is the standard according to sastras and vedic culture.

So do your grace agree that

According to Srila Prabhupada, sastras and Vedic tradition do not allow women to become diksa-guru? Seeing Quote from SB 4.12.32, purport

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**Sati devi dasi**

Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 4:59 PM

<sati.bts@gmail.com>  
To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>  
Cc: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara Dasa <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratudasa <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, dasivisakha@gmail.com, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Dear SABHA members and guests of SABHA discussion,  
please accept my humble obeisance  
All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

We would like to welcome Mother Vishakha to our discussion on the topic of Vaishnavi Gurus.

@Dear Mother Vishakha, you can find attached all the files that were sent into this email discussion along with three .pdf files with all the previous emails within this topic of



discussion.

---

To send a message to this email string, please do not forget to use "Reply to All" button. Please confine this discussion to only this (one) email string. Thank you!

with love from your servant,  
secretary of SABHA,  
Sati dd

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 5:05 PM



**[Damodara Dasa](#)**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA"

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,

janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Mahatma Prabhu,

Please accept my humble obeisances,

My reply below in Red:

Your servant,  
damodara das

Regarding performing one's duties, the question is, at least in my mind, what is the duty Prabhupada wanted for advanced female preachers.

Please consider this:

**Just like our women, Kṛṣṇa conscious, they are working. They don't want equal rights with the men.** It is due to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are cleansing the temple, they are cooking very nicely. They are satisfied. They never said that **"I have to go to Japan for preaching like Prabhupāda." They never say. This is artificial.** So Kṛṣṇa consciousness means work in his constitutional position. The women, men, when they remain in their constitutional position, there will be no artificial

>> Morning Walk, May 27, 1974, Rome

And this also (Prabhupada established Brahmacharini ashram but he did not want it and want it reverted back):

That the Brahmacharini ashram is a good success is very good news. **But the best thing will be if the grown-up Brahmacharinis get married. According to Vedic culture, woman is never to remain independent. I shall be glad if the Brahmacharinis can have nice husbands, and live as Grhasthas.** But if they cannot find out good husbands, it is better to remain a Brahmacharini all the life, even though it is little difficult.

>> Letter to Satsvarupa, Montreal, 8 Aug 1968

Thus in India Prabhupada never started a brahmacharini ashram.

Also Srila Prabhupada wanted to establish Daiva Varnasrama Dharma in ISKCON which clearly indicates his desire regarding female devotees in ISKCON. He says—

Among the four yugas—Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali—the Kali-yuga is the worst, but **if the process of varṇāśrama-dharma is introduced, even in this Age of Kali, the situation of Satya-yuga can be invoked. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, is meant for this purpose.**

>> SB 9.10.51, purport

So although sastric evidence is, of course important and considered, we don't want to use such evidence to obscure Prabhupada wishes.

Neither a sādhu (saintly person or Vaiṣṇava) **nor a bona fide spiritual master says anything that is beyond the scope of the sanction of the revealed scriptures.**

>> Cc 1.7.48, purport

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**Sati devi dasi**

<sati.bts@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 5:05 PM

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>  
Cc: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara Dasa <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratudasa <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, dasivisakha@gmail.com, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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The weight of the files in the previous email exceeds the allowed limit for some e-mail that is why I am attaching a link to the files for those whose email has limit for attachments.

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with love,  
ys Sati dd

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:11 PM



**[Carl Woodham](#)**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Thank you, Damodara Prabhu, for acknowledging that you do believe women can become brahmans. Let's see if I now understand you correctly. You say:

1. Women and sudras (or less) can become brahmans.
2. When such men become brahmans, their bodies change. They are no longer sudras.
3. However, when women become brahmans, their bodies do not change. They remain women.

Question: when sudra men change their bodies to brahmans as you have stated, exactly what changes occur? Are they changes to the gross or subtle body? And why do these changes occur in men but not women?

Ys,  
Kalakantha das

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:36 PM



**[Carl Woodham](#)**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS  
(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das



<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Krishna Kirti Prabhu, with regard to Parvati's anger at Chitraketu, on the occasion cited her husband had to calm her. However, on another occasion, when Brghu Muni insulted Siva, Parvati had to calm him.

There are other such examples of women surpassing men in intelligence and devotion.

The point is that when men feel categorically superior to women, they are acting on the bodily concept of life. This leads to sexual and spousal abuse and other kinds of offenses, even among so called advanced devotees.

In the Harinam Chintamani, Bhaktivinode Thakur explains that the first offense to the Holy Name, sadhu ninda, occurs when devotees judge other devotees based on their birth. In your paper, though the Bharadwaja Samhita makes no such statement, you assert that a woman's birth as lower than any male birth, asserting that men can be purified in ways women cannot, unless they are identified in some unnamed way as uttama adhikaris. How is this not judging Vaishnavis based on their birth?

Kindly answer this question in a brief manner.

Ys,  
Kd

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:45 PM

**Carl Woodham**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Damodara Prabhu, you mention that in India Srila Prabhupada never started a brahmacarini ashram. He started dozens of them in the West. Was he deviating from sadhu and sastra in your opinion?

Ys,

Kd

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:59 PM



**Sati devi dasi**

<sati.bts@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA"

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha  
Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS  
(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
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Please use the last email list of participants from my today's email or this e-mail.

I have forwarded it to Mother Vishakha.

We have to control the list of participants and reply using "Reply to All" button and it may be a bit tricky when new email addresses are added. Today I have added two e-mails: [dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com) for Mother Vishakha & email of Brahmaturtha prabhu, a member of SABHA. Please be so kind not to exclude these participants from your reply.

Thank you!

with love from your servant,  
secretary of SABHA,  
Sati dd

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Wed, Jan 9, 2019 at 9:29 AM



**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Kalakantha Prabhu,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

**My reply below in red:**

## Your servant, damodara das

1. Women and sudras (or less) can become brahmans.
2. When such men become brahmans, their bodies change. They are no longer sudras.
3. However, when women become brahmans, their bodies do not change. They remain women.

Question: when sudra men change their bodies to brahmans as you have stated, exactly what changes occur? Are they changes to the gross or subtle body? And why do these changes occur in men but not women?

Varṇa and līṅga are different categories altogether. Varṇa means class and līṅga means gender. Varṇa is based on qualities while līṅga (gender) is based on bodily features. I don't think anyone will opine here that after becoming devotee, a female body gradually changes to a male body. Do you think so?

The brahminical qualities that a person starts developing after becoming a devotee is satya, sama, dama, titiksa, arjavam, etc. This does make one paramarthika brahmana. Do you want to say that female body cannot have these qualities?

However, because the gender doesn't change, females still remain females. Now it is the female gender that is prohibited by sastras and by Srila Prabhupada (in SB 4.12.32, purport) from becoming diksa-guru.

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## [SABHA 2019] Fwd: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

[Inbox](#)



Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 9:02 PM

[Carl Woodham](#)

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Mahaman Das <mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"

<Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net>, "... " <siddha\_007@163.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos -

NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>,

Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>,

Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Mahaman Prabhu (and Nrsimhananda Prabhu),

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Please excuse me if you found what I said rude. I take exception to this whole procedure, and I have privately and publicly expressed such to Nrsimhananda Prabhu but he has chosen to dismiss my objections.

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I feel it is nonsense to post an anonymous proposal, period. Why are we discussing a proposal whose origin is not disclosed? Why the secrecy? Do you think this is proper?

I feel it is patently unfair to allow two antagonists to address SABHA without first securing at least one protagonist. Do you think this is proper?

In the book change discussion, permission was first sought from the members for such a discussion. Then we started with a proposal from an identified, qualified devotee. Then we secured an antagonist and a protagonist. Then the discussion began.

None of these commonsense, respectful procedures have occurred in SABHAs VDG discussion. It is sad and frustrating for me to see SABHA, which is supposed to be an objective advisory group, being subjected to such abuse.

How do you feel about it?

Ys,  
Kd

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 1:20 AM Mahaman Das <[mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net)> wrote:

Dear Sabha members and others on this thread.

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All Glories to Srila Prabhupad!  
My two cents worth:

1) I found Kalakantha Prabhu's referring to Nrsimhananda Prabhu's proposal as 'nonsense' rather rude, and intimidating, and not maintaining the decorum of this August discussion. He and others may not agree or support this proposal and certainly they are entitled to this and can vote against. But everyone should please realise there are many supporters and dissenters on this divisive issue.

2) Nrsimhananda Prabhu in his response to the probability math of Krishna Kirti Prabhu has made a very nice point that there could have been gurus of either gender who are not included in the list as given by SBSST.

3) I am just curious to know that even in the presence of Srila Prabhupad, there were many highly qualified Vaisnavis. Yet the 11 persons Srila Prabhupad selected ( be they ritviks as some claim , or regular gurus) were all male.

I would like to be enlightened whether this can have any bearing on the discussion.

Supporters of either view or neutral may respond.

[Edit labels](#)

4) Krishna Kirti Prabhu in one of his posts said that "instituting VDG is a change. Otherwise there would not be discussion about it." Quite interesting.

Thanking you,  
Ys,  
Mahaman Das

Sent from my iPad

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 9:08 PM

**Sati devi dasi**

<sati.bts@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, dasivisakha@gmail.com, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Carl Woodham** <[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>

Date: Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 6:32 PM

Subject: Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 9:20 PM

**Sati devi dasi**

&lt;sati.bts@gmail.com&gt;

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, dasivisakha@gmail.com, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

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I agree with Kalakantha prabhu that this email conversation started in a way that raises questions. I suggest we work out a procedure for such initiatives (in a separate discussion, preferably on SABHA FF or group, not to bore the guests of this discussion) to avoid such precedents in future. My humble suggestion. I am deeply concerned with the fact that both designated spokespersons that were offered as experts are aggressively against the subject of discussion. This really does not allow me, personally, to get a balanced view of arguments for and against.

with love from your servant,  
Sati dd

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 9:26 PM

**David Shapiro**

&lt;nrsimhananda@gmail.com&gt;

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "cc: Damodara Dasa"

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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As far as the anonymous proposal, I crafted it based on my discussions with various anti-VDG devotees. I presented my summation of their position with a cumulative input of thoughts which I felt represented their perspective. I did so as a service to the point of view of the devotees who oppose VDG and had expressed a desire for the SABHA to tackle the subject. I did not identify any specific person since the proposal represented, in my opinion, their general concerns. I was present at the GBC mid-term meeting when the GBC committee empowered to present the GBC with their siddhanta on the subject made what was suppose to be a secret presentation. Therefore, I was bound by rules of confidentiality not to disclose anything about it though someone leaked it later. When asked by the loyal opposition to reveal its contents, I refused. I was added to the fog-discussions group and saw that there was great concern. I suggested that the SABHA could take up the topic. My belief is always that by bringing together



different points of view, consensus can be achieved - or at least, understanding and compassion. This proposal is not some inappropriate, back-door entry to the SABHA. I swung the door wide open myself.

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 9:41 PM

[pancaratnadas](#)

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, krishnakirti@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com

Cc: askindredspirits@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudasa108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Dear Mahatma Prabhu, you may only be aware of only one woman but does that mean there are no others.

We were talking about exceptional female devotees, who may be considered by the gbc to initiate due to their exceptional qualities and now you want to say that all women are exceptional in their devotion because they are women.

Cannot really understand what you are saying, please excuse. Can you reword it so I'm clear.

Your servant pancaratna dasa

Sent from my MI MAX 2

On 8 Jan 2019 2:50 pm, Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

From what I have seen, female diksa gurus will naturally be the exception, so in a sense we don't have to control the rarity of that service for women. For example, if we now allow women to initiate I am only aware of one woman who might ask to do it (because she has many devotees asking her for initiation).

In a message dated 1/8/2019 9:14:from 18 AM India Standard Time,



[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com) writes:

Dear Sabha Members

It was mentioned that only two were giving replies against VDG and it is supposed to mean something, but I know most are like me and happy to read the questions and are enjoying the Sastra and convincing replies.

I must thank Krishna Kirti Prabhu and Damodara Prabhu for giving us their time and understanding, I am certainly more convinced that VDG is a rarity. Not that there will be no VDG but that it is a rarity.

We must not make the exception into the rule. It is always better to make the rule strong to maintain the integrity of Prabhupada and his movement and that is not an offense. But if we, out of good reason or sentiment, make those very special exceptions into the rule then we open the whole system to much wider interpretation and a weakening of our standards, which greatly effects in places like India.

Our GBC always have the right and the power to recognise any real exceptional devotee, someone who stands out as exceptional to everyone in all respects and if they feel, they may easily make the exception, as we saw Srila Prabhupada do in other circumstances.

But that should be an exception in an exceptional case, it must not be the rule. Not only is this from a practical point of view but we are seeing it is also Sastra.

Tomorrow I will write something from Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur that he has to say on the topic which is perhaps a bit more authoritative.

Your servant pancaratna dasa

Sent from my MI MAX 2

On 8 Jan 2019 2:39 am, Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 12:00 AM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Yes, these are very rare cases and for this reason we've got only very few such Vaishnavis in ISKCON on the whole planet right now. But why do we need to bar them continuously from the service?

I would approach your question first from an historical point of view: Why have female ācāryas always been rare? In this regard there are two possible explanations: there is something in the spiritual tradition (śāstra, ācāryas, sadācāra, etc.) that makes it so (and is by definition bona fide), or there is something *against* the spiritual tradition preventing women from participating in equal numbers (and is by definition *not* bona fide). In the latter case, you would have to argue that the non-bona fide thing in the spiritual tradition that has been holding women back has been extant pretty much with the religion itself, and that would implicate the ācāryas and the śāstras in perpetrating irreligious acts.

Now, we can say, OK, women, *because they are women*, generally don't go for this because women generally don't do jobs like hauling garbage, or the like. They would rather be teaching 1st graders. And we explain the rarity of female garbage haulers in terms of preferences born out of one's material conditioning, or material *svabhāva*.

But then we say, "However, there *are* some women that prefer to haul garbage and would excel at it if given the chance. They are very rare, but we still want to give them a chance because we believe that everyone should be allowed to act according to their God-given propensities and thereby benefit society. God wouldn't have made her expert in hauling garbage rather than teaching 1st graders if He (or she?) had not given her a talent for hauling garbage. So, let her haul garbage."

Now, here is the problem: *the śāstras say that just because we have some propensity to do some particular duty doesn't mean we should be doing it.* In Bhagavad-gītā (18.46), Kṛṣṇa calls this *paradharma*, which is defined as the practice of religious principles meant for another (or that one is not fit for). Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this in terms of a kṣātriya wanting to practice non-violence like a brāhmaṇa is improper, which is one of the reasons why Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself gave repeatedly to Arjuna to fight. And the Lord even says that it is better to do one's own duty (sva-dharma) though full of faults than another's perfectly (BG 18.47). And the reason he gives is that such duties are not touched by sin.

This last point of one's own prescribed duties (svadharma) not being touched by sin is very important when considering whether one is eligible to take up the duties of an ācārya, or dīkṣā-guru. Someone may say, a spiritual master is completely transcendental, but what if *you* aren't completely transcendental? What if you are only 99% transcendental and still have 1% material conditioning? Does it sound like the situation of the vast majority of gurus in ISKCON, if not all of them? I think that's accurate. And the women who are being considered now for becoming ācārya are most likely in that category, too. They may be very good devotees

otherwise, but they are still *māyā-kavalīta*, or still practicing bhakti while under the influence of the material energy.

Hence, in order to act as *ācārya*, one must do so according to the particular *vidhi*, or rules and regulations, that one is fit to follow. That is, one must perform one's svadharma prescribed according to his, or her, svabhāva.

Now, there are two vidhis we follow in ISKCON. One is the bhāgavata-vidhi, and the other is the *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*, and by either vidhi, one can be a *dīkṣā-guru*, provided one is qualified. If you are someone like Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, then you can give *dīkṣā* in whatever way you want. You are a mahābhāgavata who is beyond the rules of the Vedic injunctions. You are the exception, the "very special case."

But if you are not, then you have to follow the *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*, because you are not fully free of the effects of material nature, and the *pañcarātras* give the rules that one has to follow in order to act as a bona fide *dīkṣā-guru* while still acting under the influence of the material nature. Now, as far as *Nārada Pañcarātra* is concerned, it does prohibit women from acting as *ācārya*, or *dīkṣā-guru*, as long as they are not at the level of *yogapratyakṣā-nāthānam*, or seeing God face-to-face. It's not an absolute prohibition against women, but it's there nonetheless, so we have to follow it.

And we have to follow it because our *ācārya* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura established *pāñcarātrika-vidhi* for initiations for our disciplic succession. None of us don't have any choice about it, unless one truly is in the exceptional category stipulated by *Nārada Pañcarātra*.

Now, one can say, "Well, I'm going to follow what Śrīla Prabhupāda said, I don't care for this or that *śāstra*." But he said we should follow the *śāstras*, and he quite consciously subordinated himself to them and expected his students to do so. Śrīla Prabhupāda makes it very clear in CC 20.352 purport that we act according to *śāstra*.

If someone thinks that both Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions and *śāstra* are opposed to each other in some circumstances, then his (or her) information about the matter is incomplete, much as how Śrīla Prabhupāda said he held some doubt regarding SBSST's ordering a snake to be killed until he read the famous passage in the Bhāgavatam about how a saintly person rejoices when a snake is killed.

So, in the same way, when we came across these verses in *Nārada Pañcarātra*, we saw that they nicely explain why female *ācāryas* are so rare. It was like finding the missing piece of a puzzle. They must at least be on the stage of *bhāva*. And we know from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that

bhāva-bhakti is extremely rare. Thus it is no coincidence that female ācāryas in our line have been extremely rare.

Now, if those verses are not accepted, then one quite simply does not have a pramāṇa from śāstra to explain their rarity. Being ācārya, is not a prescribed duty for non-siddha women, because their svabhava one of our pūrvācāryas have decided we should follow pāñcarātri-vidhi. Otherwise, they will not be able to act as ācārya without incurring sin. That is pratikula for bhakti, not anukula.

Your servant, Kṛṣṇā-kīrti Dāsa

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

On 7 Jan 2019, at 21:12, Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

You wrote,

The most peculiar point for me personally in all the discussions is the definition of who is siddha and who is not. Somehow the stress is on seeing Kṛṣṇa face to face, which is not so easily verifiable and not at all what Srila Prabhupada and Srila Rupa Goswami mostly stressed.

But don't you think it is also peculiar that women acting as ācārya in our lines is also so rare? I mentioned the absence of the name of a woman in the guru-paramparā list in Bhagavad-gītā As It Is. The Caitanya Tree in CC Adi Lila is another. In that list, out of more than 120 names, only two are female, and they don't appear to be in some sort of ācārya-like role.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

On Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 11:13 PM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Vaisnavas.  
Please accept my humble obeisances.

## All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

The most peculiar point for me personally in all the discussions is the definition of who is siddha and who is not. Somehow the stress is on seeing Kṛṣṇa face to face, which is not so easily verifiable and not at all what Srila Prabhupada and Srila Rupa Goswami mostly stressed. They defined Uttama Adhikari as the one who is: **completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others**, ...strictly following all the regulative principles, chanting the prescribed number of rounds on japa beads and always thinking of how to expand the Krishna consciousness movement.

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 9:43 PM

### [David Shapiro](#)

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

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In response to Sati dd's concern about the two devotees against the idea of VDG who were added to the discussion, we have also added two prominent pro-VDG advocates who accepted the invitation. This is a similar format to

our previous experience with Dravida and Garuda pr's. In this case, two for and two against. I think the word that you used - aggressively - is a bit incendiary. They are passionate about their research and conclusions as are people like Kalakantha pr. and the other invitees. This subject naturally brings up emotions - nothing wrong with that. Some people are more emotional based than others despite their honored scholarship; some people are more cerebral. We have to look past the emotions like is done in a court of law. This debate eventually will find the essential issues which are derived from the guru/sadhu/and shastras. Let us not be too much disturbed if their is some righteousness thrown into the mix. We are all trying to serve Srila Prabhupada's mission.

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 10:08 PM

[pancaratnadas](#)

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯



<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

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Dear Kalakantha Prabhu

I agree fully with Mahaman Prabhu and support Nrisimhananda Prabhu and I take objection that you accuse him of abuse of power.

Let us focus on the discussion and not on our personal feelings. Saying that those who have not allowed VDG are offensive, who is that, you mean the GBC? please keep your personal opinions out and let's focus on the facts as are being presented.

There are two others we are wishing to hear from who support VDG but there was some problem with the mail of Vishaka DD and the other has not responded for his own good reasons, maybe he familiarising himself with the discussion.

We have a way to go and this is a topic of deep concern and which reflects on the original topic of Position of Guru in ISKCON which is also not clear to many.

Your servant pancaratna dasa

Sent from my MI MAX 2

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 10:12 PM

[Lana Morozova](#)

<morozova.svetlana@gmail.com>

To: pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>,

"Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmada@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

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I am sorry, I have missed who is the second expert pro VDG? Please kindly clarify.

вт, 8 янв. 2019, 19:39 pancaratnadas [pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com):

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 10:19 PM

### **Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: carlwoodham@gmail.com, mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net

Cc: krishnakirti@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com, Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net,

siddha\_007@163.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com,

nrsimhananda@gmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com,

janavidevi@hotmail.com, Kratudas108@yahoo.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, mahatmada@gmail.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com,

suresvara@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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We should have discussed whether or not to invite Damodara and Krishna Kirti Prabhus into andiscussion and then voted on it, rather than bring them in without any discussion and vote.

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Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 11:39 PM

### **David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"

<Drutakarma.AC BSP@pamho.net>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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We followed the same process as Bhakti Prabhupada-Kripa Damodhara Swami utilized. He wanted Dravida in on the discussions, but that wouldn't work due to confidentiality issues. We went to the email conference format. BPDS, as the sponsor of the topic, agreed for Garuda to be on it for the purposes of the debate. There was never a vote as far as I remember. But my memory is fallible. Sati dd asked me who is the "other" person that we invited on this conference and I don't remember. Not sure whom Pancaratna is referring to. We can just have one "outside" spokesperson pro and con. I would ask one of our two "con" experts to defer to the other and speak as one voice.

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Wed, Jan 9, 2019 at 4:28 AM

**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: nrsimhananda@gmail.com

Cc: carlwoodham@gmail.com, mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, krishnakirti@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, Drutakarma.AC BSP@pamho.net, siddha\_007@163.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com,

janavidevi@hotmail.com, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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As I remember we did discuss having a email conference and who would be part of it, and we all approved. Can anyone confirm or deny this?

In any case, for the future, if we intend to do something similar, shouldn't we first get everyone'a approval?

Isn't the other female diksa guru advocate that we invited Madan Mohan?

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Wed, Jan 9, 2019 at 4:29 AM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: nrsimhananda@gmail.com

Cc: carlwoodham@gmail.com, mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, krishnakirti@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, Drutakarma.AC BSP@pamho.net, siddha\_007@163.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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sorry for not being clear. I meant we did discuss a conference with Dravida and Garuda Prabhus before we decided to do it (as I remember)

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Wed, Jan 9, 2019 at 12:02 PM

**Chris Ostrowski**

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

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Dear SABHA members,

I have been very busy with organizing an ISKCON Disciples Course, which I

am doing for the first time. This service has taxed my poor 3-volt brain. While following this outpouring of comments on email, I have not had to time or focus to reply. Here is my short comment.

I have to object that this “Pro-vs-Contra Vaishnavi-Diksa” dialog is weighted against those who feel Women Devotees should be allowed to give Diksa. All the SABHA proposal items reject the idea of Women Devotees initiating. The best someone like me can hope to achieve in this exchange is that: SABHA chooses to say NOTHING! Plain and simple, that is not equibalanced in any way

I do not blame Nrsimhananda, he has submitted a proposal, taking the initiative, and we who feel affirmative about Vaishnavi Diksa should craft our own proposal in opposition to it. There is little in the proposal below I care to affirm, I am not convinced by its logic nor do I wish to nit-pick it. I am willing to participate or even get the ball rolling in such a counter-proposal, but I do not wish to find out there is some discussion protocol that I failed to observe and have to re-craft it, so if there is some issue in a counter-proposal, please let me know ASAP. Why should we wait for a vote to either accept this unacceptable proposal or have SABHA remain silent?

Note the wording of the original proposal:

- (1) Whereas SP guided the society to respect sastric evidence as superior to guru/sadhu
- (2) Whereas the evidence clearly points to the conclusion that VDG/FDG are prohibited from taking on the role of a male in all but the most extraordinary circumstances clearly defined by sastra
- (3) Whereas the ISKCON society, especially in India, is vehemently divided on this issue
- (4) Whereas the SAC did not accurately represent the facts in their presentation to the GBC
- (5) Whereas the VDG committee admitted that they could not speculate on what Srila Prabhupada would do
- (6) Whereas, Srila Prabhupada continued to increasingly emphasize the need for varnasrama in ISKCON
- (7) Whereas ISKCON will be viewed as an apasampradaya by other Vaisnava sangas and marginalized in the hearts and minds of scholars, yogi's and religionists who agree with Burke Rockford's assessment of ISKCON politics having drawn the society away from sastric siddhanta
- (8 & more) for all those reasons and more, the SABHA recommends that there be no authorization of VDG/FDG by ISKCON.

your servant,

Candraskhara Swami

**From:** Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 8, 2019 10:59 PM

**To:** Carl Woodham

**Cc:** David Shapiro; Mahatma Das; Sati devi dasi; Krishnarupa Dasi; Prabhupada dasa b.; Narahari; Bhakti Rasayana Sagar; Richard Hall; Ajita Cozzi; Atmanivedana Swami; BB Keshava Swami; Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami; BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG); Chris Ostrowski; Dhruva Kusa Shah; Divya Priya; Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA); Kratu Das; Madhuri Pura Dasa; Mahaman (das) ACBSP; Mahatma Das; Pancaratna Dasa; rucira dasi; Rukmini Walker; 徐达斯; janavi devi; Sri Oppecini; Vrnda dd; Krishna Kirti Das

**Subject:** Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

Respected Kalakantha Prabhu,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

My reply below in red:

Your servant,  
damodara das

1. Women and sudras (or less) can become brahmans.
2. When such men become brahmans, their bodies change. They are no longer sudras.
3. However, when women become brahmans, their bodies do not change. They remain women.

Question: when sudra men change their bodies to brahmans as you have stated, exactly what changes occur? Are they changes to the gross or subtle body? And why do these changes occur in men but not women?

Varṇa and liṅga are different categories altogether. Varṇa means class and liṅga means gender. Varṇa is based on qualities while liṅga (gender) is based on bodily features. I don't think anyone will opine here that after becoming devotee, a female body gradually changes to a male body. Do you think so?

The brahminical qualities that a person starts developing after becoming a devotee is satya, sama, . dama, titiksa, arjavam, etc. This does make one paramarthika brahmana. Do you want to say that female body cannot have these qualities?

However, because the gender doesn't change, females still remain females. Now it is the female gender that is prohibited by sastras and by Srila Prabhupada (in SB 4.12.32, purport) from becoming diksa-guru.

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Wed, Jan 9, 2019 at 2:29 PM

[pancaratnadas](#)

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>



To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>  
Cc: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriadhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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I thought you said there is a devotee who was a follower of gopipranadhana Prabhu who you had invited. Madhan Mohanji Prabhu, who is also a gbc deputy and a younger Brahmachari who is conversant with this topic and pro VDG but I see he was only suggested and maybe never actually invited. My mistake, perhaps if the body feels he could be now officially invited

Sent from my MI MAX 2

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Wed, Jan 9, 2019 at 3:03 PM

**Carl Woodham**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

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Dear Damodara Prabhu,

Thank you for clarifying. Your position, then, is that janma (birth as a woman) trumps guna (any brahminical qualities a woman may develop) except in the rarest of cases (spiritual perfection).

You offer no means of identifying this spiritual perfection in women or men. One SABHA

member suggest the GBC could do it. Does anyone really think the GBC would ever dare designate someone as a siddha?

One of the qualities of a brahman is sama-darsini, the ability to see others equally, which means as spirit souls. So if a male brahmana lacks this quality, is he really a brahmana?

No, male bodies don't transfer to female bodies. In the same way, a male's transformation from sudra to brahmana is not physical. It is a transformation of the subtle body. There is no basis in sastra to say that the same transformation does not occur when women become Vaishnavi brahmans. To think women remain women is the bodily concept of life.

Srila Prabhupada said to Vishaka devi, "Anyone who thinks they are a woman is less intelligent." Similarly, any man who thinks a woman is a woman must also be less intelligent.

Srila Prabhupada clearly made no spiritual distinction between his male and female brahminically initiated disciples. He instructed Saradiya, a twice initiated disciple, to give her husband Vaikunthanath the Gayatri mantra. He said that his female disciples were not ordinary women.

This anti-Vaishnavi bias has caused immense suffering in ISKCON. Husbands feel entitled to beat wives. Female devotees are sometimes harassed by sexual predators in leadership roles. Vaishnavis are treated as second class citizens. My friend who just returned from Vrindavan gave a vivid example. Even today, nearly half the members of SABHA, some of whom have been serving him faithfully for fifty years, would not be allowed to chant japa in Srila Prabhupada's room during japa time because they are seen as women, not Vaishnavis.

Damodar Prabhu, even if you don't understand or care, the Vaishnavis and at least some of the men on this conference know exactly what I am talking about.

SABHA members, please act to show that men on the highest level of our movement are free of this illusory bodily conception of life. Help fulfill at least in some small way Srila Prabhupada's expressly stated desire that all his sons and daughters acquire the title Bhaktivedanta and with it the right to initiate disciples.

Your servant,  
Kalakantha das ACBSP

PS: At Nrsimhananda Prabhu's request I have done my best to participate in this discussion, though I wanted to approach the topic first among SABHA members. My duties no longer allow me to continue. I will post two more pieces of evidence concerning Vaishnavi diksa gurus, as well as a proposal to cooperate with the GBC body on this matter, and will then have to bow out. My best to all involved.

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Wed, Jan 9, 2019 at 3:35 PM

**Rukmini Walker**

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>

To: pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Yes, he should be invited. That would appear to level the field of the discussion.

Ys,

Rukmini dd

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Wed, Jan 9, 2019 at 10:29 PM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>

Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,

Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Mahatma Das <mahatmada@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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I sent Madha Mohan the invitation.

YS Nrsimhananda das

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Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 4:49 AM

### **Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: askindredspirits@gmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com

Cc: nrsimhananda@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com,

mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, krishnakirti@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com, Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net,

siddha\_007@163.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com,

dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com,

Kratudas108@yahoo.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com,

mahatmada@gmail.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, pdb108@yahoo.com,

suresvara@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com,

sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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i would be interested in hearing from him (madan mohan prabhu)

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Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 9:44 AM

### **Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>,

Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers

Due to malfunctioning of my computer, I have given it for repair and thus may not be available for today.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das



Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 10:34 AM

[Krishna Kirti Das](#)

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma



(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Kalakantha Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:36 PM Carl Woodham <[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)> wrote:

Krishna Kirti Prabhu, with regard to Parvati's anger at Chitraketu, on the occasion cited her husband had to calm her. However, on another occasion, when Brghu Muni insulted Siva, Parvati had to calm him.

There are other such examples of women surpassing men in intelligence and devotion.

One thing we are not allowed to do is contradict śāstra and an ācārya who is in the position of being a liberated soul. If Śrīla Prabhupāda says "It may be clearly said that the understanding of a woman is always inferior to the understanding of a man." That has to be accepted as it is. Otherwise, we are putting our pratyakṣa and anumāna above śāstra and liberated souls.

Let's suppose a particular woman is more intelligent and devotional than a particular man, and let us further say that man is sufficiently qualified to be a dīkṣā-guru. Then the natural question is "If he can be guru, why can't the woman?"

The reason is śāstra. If truth were identical with appearances, there would be no need of śāstra. Therefore in this particular case, because the śāstra says a woman needs to be superlatively qualified whereas a man does not (not all men, just those who are dvija by quality), we have to accept without question in the same way we have to accept the Vedic injunction that the stool of the cow is pure.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

p.s. I'm responding to the rest of your post in a separate email.

The point is that when men feel categorically superior to women, they are acting on the bodily concept of life. This leads to sexual and spousal abuse and other kinds of



offenses, even among so called advanced devotees.

In the Harinam Chintamani, Bhaktivinode Thakur explains that the first offense to the Holy Name, sadhu ninda, occurs when devotees judge other devotees based on their birth. In your paper, though the Bharadwaja Samhita makes no such statement, you assert that a woman's birth as lower than any male birth, asserting that men can be purified in ways women cannot, unless they are identified in some unnamed way as uttama adhikaris. How is this not judging Vaishnavis based on their birth?

Kindly answer this question in a brief manner.

Ys,  
Kd

On Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 10:05 PM Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Also relevant -- a highly unpopular quote, but it is direct from SP.

Here is a difference between male and female that exists even in the higher statuses of life -- in fact, even between Lord Siva and his wife. Lord Siva could understand Citraketu very nicely, but Parvati could not. Thus even in the higher statuses of life there is a difference between the understanding of a male and that of a female. It may be clearly said that the understanding of a woman is always inferior to the understanding of a man. In the Western countries there is now agitation to the effect that man and woman should be considered equal, but from this verse it appears that woman is always less intelligent than man.

>>> Ref. VedaBase => SB 6.17.34, SB 6.17.35, SB 6.17.34–35

It seems this would also account for women being rare or exceptional as ācāryas.

Ys, KKdas

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:31 AM Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 12:00 AM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Yes, these are very rare cases and for this reason we've got only very few such Vaishnavis in ISKCON on the whole planet right now. But why do we need to bar them continuously from the service?

This seems relevant:

When Gandhari came to know that her future husband was a blind man, to follow her life companion she decided to become voluntarily blind. So she wrapped up her eyes with many silk linens, and she was married to Dhrtarastra under the guidance of her elder brother Sakuni. She was the most beautiful girl of her time, and she was equally qualified by her womanly qualities, which endeared her to every member of the Kaurava court. But despite all her good qualities, she had the **natural frailties of a woman**, and she was envious of Kunti when the latter gave birth to a male child. Both the queens were pregnant, but Kunti first gave birth to a male child. Thus Gandhari became angry and gave a blow to her own abdomen.

>>> Ref. VedaBase => SB 1.13.3, SB 1.13.4, SB 1.13.3–4

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

On 7 Jan 2019, at 21:12, Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Maharaja, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

You wrote,

The most peculiar point for me personally in all the discussions is the definition of who is siddha and who is not. Somehow the stress is on seeing Kṛṣṇa face to face, which is not so easily verifiable and not at all what Srila Prabhupada and Srila Rupa Goswami mostly stressed.

But don't you think it is also peculiar that women acting as ācārya in our lines is also so rare? I mentioned the absence of the name of a woman in the guru-paramparā list in Bhagavad-gītā As It Is. The Caitanya Tree in CC Adi Lila is another. In that list, out of more than 120 names, only two are female, and they don't appear to be in some sort of ācārya-like role.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

On Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 11:13 PM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Vaisnavas.  
Please accept my humble obeisances.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

The most peculiar point for me personally in all the discussions is the definition of who is siddha and who is not. Somehow the stress is on seeing Kṛṣṇa face to face, which is not so easily verifiable and not at all what Srila Prabhupada and Srila Rupa Goswami mostly stressed. They defined Uttama Adhikari as the one who is: **completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others**, ...strictly following all the regulative principles, chanting the prescribed number of rounds on japa beads and always thinking of how to expand the Krishna consciousness movement.

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Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 11:04 AM

[Bhakti Rasayana Sagar](#)

<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>

Cc: Carl Woodham <[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>, Rukmini Walker <[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)>, Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>, David Shapiro <[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>, Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>, Sati devi dasi <[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)>, Krishnarupa Dasi <[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <[pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com)>, Narahari <[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com)>, Richard Hall <[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com)>, Ajita Cozzi <[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com)>, Atmanivedana Swami <[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net)>, BB Keshava Swami <[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com)>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com)>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <[BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net)>, Chris Ostrowski <[chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com)>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <[dhruva.k.108@gmail.com](mailto:dhruva.k.108@gmail.com)>, Divya Priya <[divyajps@yahoo.com](mailto:divyajps@yahoo.com)>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <[Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net)>, Kratu Das <[Kratudas108@yahoo.com](mailto:Kratudas108@yahoo.com)>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <[mpd.vda@gmail.com](mailto:mpd.vda@gmail.com)>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <[Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net)>, Mahatma Das <[mahatmadasa@gmail.com](mailto:mahatmadasa@gmail.com)>, Pancaratna Dasa <[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>, rucira dasi <[ruciradasi@gmail.com](mailto:ruciradasi@gmail.com)>, 徐达斯 <[siddha\\_007@163.com](mailto:siddha_007@163.com)>, janavi devi <[janavidevi@hotmail.com](mailto:janavidevi@hotmail.com)>, Sri Oppecini <[sriradhita@gmail.com](mailto:sriradhita@gmail.com)>, Vrnda dd

<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Krishna Kirti Prabhu:

Two things to consider in your response:

- 1) Prabhupada made a clear cut difference between a women and Vaisnavis, which it appears you tend to ignore.
- 2) Less intelligent refers to the constant emotional influence, which women can't block, as opposed to men. So it doesn't at all mean that they can't be smarter than men. But in challenging circumstances their emotions can cloud their intelligence.

And even though mind and senses are inferior to the intelligence, which is the reason women are described as inferior to men, but it's important to remember that in the Bhakti Yoga feelings directed towards Krishna are more important than the intelligence. Therefore Vaishnavis can, and many times do have an advantage which Vaisnavas are lacking.

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

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Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 11:24 AM

**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd

<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Kalakantha Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 8:36 PM Carl Woodham <[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)> wrote:

The point is that when men feel categorically superior to women, they are acting on the bodily concept of life. This leads to sexual and spousal abuse and other kinds of offenses, even among so called advanced devotees.

Pramāṇas?

In the Harinam Chintamani, Bhaktivinode Thakur explains that the first offense to the Holy Name, sadhu ninda, occurs when devotees judge other devotees based on their birth.

Please quote. I would like to see the reference you have in mind.

In your paper, though the Bharadwaja Samhita makes no such statement, you assert that a woman's birth as lower than any male birth, asserting that men can be purified in ways women cannot,

Just as in this case, I do not recall ever saying that men can be purified in ways women cannot. Woman is being purified like man through devotional process, but śāstra says she is still not allowed to be dīkṣā-guru at certain lower stages of spiritual development whereas some men (not all) are not.

It may be that you are conflating acquisition of position like dīkṣā-guru with purification. To say that (some) men at certain lower levels of spiritual development may become *dīkṣā-guru* whereas women cannot at those same levels is not at all the same as saying women cannot be purified like men.

unless they are identified in some unnamed way as uttama adhikaris. How is this not judging Vaishnavis based on their birth?

It is common across Vedic literature to judge people based on their birth. *maṁ hi partha vyapāśrityaḥ ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ, strīyo vaiśyas tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parām gatim*, so discrimination is there. Women are classified with vaiśyas, śūdras and others as being lower birth. But it is said simultaneously that they can achieve the supreme destination. And in the next verse 9.33, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "How much more this is so of the righteous brāhmaṇas, the devotees and the

saintly kings." So, there is discrimination there.

People follow religious injunctions according to their adhikāra, or authority to follow it. Therefore there are rules and regulations for different people who are in different statuses of life. Not everyone has the same status, and those regulations are sometimes administered according to the different bodies a person has. Yes, that is discrimination, but it is discrimination that results in purification and spiritual advancement.

Respectfully,

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

p.s. Just as a matter of form, and to avoid unnecessary disputes, I would like to suggest that if someone says somebody said something, then please quote it. The extra attention to precision helps much in reducing misunderstanding. That's just a suggestion

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Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 2:53 PM

**[Carl Woodham](#)**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishtnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishtnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanaagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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## Survey Results

Dear Reader,

PAMHO. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

These are the results of the only survey regarding Vaishnavi diksa gurus in ISKCON which, to my knowledge, has ever been done. It was an online survey done in 2016. There were 550 replies.

If anyone can't read this I can re-post as a document. Let me know.

Your servant,  
Kalakantha das ACBSP

**1. There are female disciples of Srila Prabhupada who are or can become spiritually qualified to initiate disciples. (89% agree, 7% disagree).**

Strongly agree:	77%
Agree:	12%
No opinion:	4%
Disagree:	2%
Strongly disagree:	5%

**2. Women experience discrimination in ISKCON. (78% agree, 7% disagree).**

Strongly agree:	54%
Agree:	24%
No opinion:	15%
Disagree:	3%
Strongly disagree:	4%

**3. I feel that people just becoming familiar with ISKCON are confused by the differing roles of men or women. (75% agree, 9% disagree).**

Strongly agree:	53%
Agree:	22%
No opinion:	16%
Disagree:	4%
Strongly disagree:	5%

**4. Having both men and women initiating prospective disciples according to those disciples inspiration would encourage more people to practice Krishna consciousness. (84% agree, 8% disagree).**

Strongly agree:	64%
Agree:	20%
No opinion:	8%
Disagree:	2%
Strongly disagree:	6%

## 5. What should the GBC consider when deciding whether to uphold or rescind resolutions about Vaishnavis initiating.

Srila Prabhupada's statements on the topic:	92%
Sastric statements on the topic:	67%
Social considerations:	44%
Other:	20%

Respondents came from North America, South America, Europe, India, Australasia and the Far East. About 1/3 were under 30, 1/3 30 to 50 and 1/3 50 and above. Slightly more women than men responded.

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Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 3:01 PM

### **Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Who conducted it? What was the sampling design? How was the survey conducted and where did you get your sampling frame from?

By profession, I am a statistician. I can tell you how reliable these results are.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 7:22 PM

**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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I am sending this because our paper on *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* actually quotes from this essay by Dr. Thomas J. Hopkins. (Highlighted portion quoted in the introduction to our paper.)

Here is the excerpt from his essay below.

### The Search for Self-Identity

Thomas J. Hopkins, "ISKCON'S Search for Self-Identity: Reflections by a Historian of Religion", ed. Graham Dwyer, Richard J. Cole, *The Hare Krishna Movement: Forty Years of Chant and Change* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2007) 186 - 187.

The search for self-identity has already started on one level in the passionate exchanges of arguments and counter-arguments, charges and defences, on ISKCON-related internet sites, which help identify some of the critical issues. Discussions at this level, however, typically generate more heat than light and seldom resolve any issues of real importance. What is needed is a long-term commitment by ISKCON to the kind of theological enterprise that is at the heart of most religious traditions: a continuing critical assessment of the tradition's sources of authority, both personal and scriptural, to gain further insights into their meaning, and a continuing evaluation of its institutions and practices to find the best ways to respond to current circumstances.

The issues involved in such an enterprise are typically not at the level of facts but at the level of values, interpretations, and priorities. Many of the disagreements within ISKCON, by contrast, involve claims that "Prabhupad said this" versus claims that "Prabhupad said that." This is the kind of literalist proof-texting that characterizes Christian and Muslim fundamentalists, and it basically settles nothing because the "proof" presented on both sides is all on the same level – i.e. it is one quote versus another, with no systematically applied exegetical principles to determine their relative authority.

The situation is if anything even worse in ISKCON than in these other traditions, because the volume of Prabhupad's statements and writings over the years is so great, and they have been so carefully recorded and made available, that a careful search of the cumulative records – an activity at which ISKCON's various factions have become very adepts – can usually turn up something to prove almost any point. This makes it even more important to have an exegetical system that can help determine the relative importance of various statements in different contexts and circumstances. Without this, there is a tendency to treat every statement as if it had *ex cathedra* authority, which is a claim that is not even made about the Pope.

Beyond the question of the relative authority of Prabhupad's statements with regard to each other is the question of their authority in relation to Vaishnava scriptures and to teachers within the Chaitanya tradition. ISKCON in the beginning had no authority except Prabhupad, because all of its access to the tradition he represented came through him. This continued even after he translated many of most important scriptures and writings of the tradition, since his translations and his commentaries gave them all his personal authority.

Is Prabhupad's authority absolute for all time, and does ISKCON accept only his authority? Prabhupad himself gave ultimate authority to Krishna, but does ISKCON believe that Krishna's guidance is available only through Prabhupad's presentation of him? Does Krishna have no independent or superior authority, or is his authority limited to what Prabhupad taught about him? Can Krishna not speak for Himself through others? Can others not speak with authority about Krishna?

These are all serious theological questions, and one could easily come up with many more. They have to do with ISKCON's core values: its interpretation of tradition and authority, the way it determines what to accept of the earlier tradition, the role it gives to its various sources of authority, and the institutional and ritual structures it employs to support and promote devotion to Krishna. How ISKCON answers these questions defines its identity, and how it goes about answering them will be an important factor in determining how well it can carry its mission forward.

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Thu, Jan 10, 2019 at 9:22 PM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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YES! Now you're talking about the CORE issues: where does the authority come from? If that could be answered, every other apparent contradiction would be much more easily resolved imo. One thing for certain: vox populi is NOT how spiritual precepts are established in the Vaisnava tradition - or in any bonafide spiritual theology. There is no "democracy" in understanding spiritual principles. The use of a survey's results to influence or decide such weighty issues is completely bogus. I don't care a fig for how people "feel" about spiritual injunctions. Ignorance is no excuse in front of the law. I don't like it, but that's true in spiritual matters just as it is in material ones. We may say the moon is made of cheese, but the moon is not subject to our perception. Similarly, the rules don't change because we want them to. We may get some kripa even though we transgress them, but they have full authority to act. Reactions to abandoning the rules are evident everywhere.

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 4:25 AM

**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com

Cc: brss108@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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I would be happy to hear anyone's opinion on the questions Dr Hopkins suggests we answer.

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 8:08 AM

## [Bhakti Rasayana Sagar](#)

<brss108@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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It is important to discriminate between the "vox populi" and well informed views of the leaders in our movement. We tend to mix things up, in the same way as when we equate women with Vaishnavis. So if this survey was done amongst leaders - which I suspect was the case - the results are to be taken very seriously. Even Srila Prabhupada was consulting with his leading disciples.

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

Sent from my iPhone

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 10:21 AM

**David Shapiro**

&lt;nrsimhananda@gmail.com&gt;

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar &lt;brss108@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Excellent point. So who was surveyed? What is defined as a "leader." Is any TP a leader? Or only Global Officers and up? Has "leadership" ever been defined in Iskcon? Three years ago at the ILS, a survey was taken of the "leaders" who were the attendees. About 600 participated. They were asked how many had read the CC for example. 40%. How many had read the entire SB? 60%.

How many had read the BG more than three times? 10% (Percentages are estimates because my memory does not recall the exact figure; I just remember how shocking they were.) Are these "leaders?" I would say that they are "vox populi." Prabhupada consulted his leaders, yes, but he was the one who defined who they were, and he was the one who could chose to take their advice or not. I don't know

that we are apples to apples with Srila Prabhupada asking his "leading" disciples for opinions and surveys of hundreds of devotees. Seems totally inappropriate to make the comparison. He's a Vaikuntha man, and that makes all the difference.

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 2:41 PM

**[Damodara Dasa](#)**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, dasivisakha@gmail.com, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Respected Kalakantha Prabhu,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

Below my reply to your email (it seems you forgot to hit ReplyAll button) in red:

Your servant,  
damodara das

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Carl Woodham** <[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>

Date: Wed, Jan 9, 2019 at 3:03 PM

Subject: Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

To: Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>

Dear Damodara Prabhu,

Thank you for clarifying. Your position, then, is that janma (birth as a woman) trumps guna (any brahminical qualities a woman may develop) except in the rarest of cases (spiritual perfection).

I repeat:

- \* Varṇa is different from liṅga (gender).
- \* Śāstra prohibits women as gender from becoming dīkṣā-guru unless they are siddha
- \* There is no reason why not to accept this instruction as it is.
- \* Sastras don't say that if a woman is brahmana then she can become guru.
- \* According to sastra and varnasrama even a brahmana woman cannot become guru
- \* Thus, I request not to try to confuse brahmana with being male or female
- \* There is no need to infer any reason behind sastras' prohibition to women to initiate
- \* Regarding "janma trumps guna" -- no it doesn't. When it is said that guna-karma-vibhagasah, it means that women also have their specific gunas and gender is one of them. SB 7.11.8-12 describes the gunas or qualities which are common to all human beings and they all can gradually develop them. While male or female gender is a specific quality which one has and cannot be changed.

You offer no means of identifying this spiritual perfection in women or men. One SABHA member suggest the GBC could do it. Does anyone really think the GBC would ever dare designate someone as a siddha?

One of the qualities of a brahman is sama-darsini, the ability to see others equally, which means as spirit souls. So if a male brahmana lacks this quality, is he really a brahmana?

Do you want to say from this verse that if a tiger becomes Krsna-conscious then he should be given a place in our brahmacari-asramas? Do you mean that by sama-darsinah?

As far as I understand, a self-realized person sees a brahmana, a cow, a dog and a dog-eater as a soul. But he doesn't deal with them as such understanding their conditioned nature and tries to give them KC in a way they can take up and advance. He will not try to convince dogs by arranging six-session Bhagavad-gita courses for them. He will try to feed him Krishna prasadam. Samadarsinah means to see every living being as souls and try to give him KC.

Srila Prabhupada mentions varnasrama system as a practical societal system set by sama-darsinas (see below quote). Thus if actually we are sama-darsis then we should make such a nice arrangement according to Krishna's system, Varnasrama, that everyone is able to take up Krishna Consciousness.

**A civilization of Āryans** who strictly follow the instructions of the Lord and never deviate from those instructions is perfect. Such civilized men **do not discriminate between trees, animals, human beings and other living entities. paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ:** [Bg. 5.18] because they are completely educated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they see all living beings equally....

Apart from the lower living entities, **those who have come to the platform of human civilization should be divided into a society of brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras.** The brāhmaṇas should follow the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as stated in Bhagavad-gītā and other Vedic literatures. The **criterion must be guṇa and karma.** In other words, one should acquire the qualities of a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya or śūdra and act accordingly. **This is the civilization accepted by the Āryans.** Why do they accept it? They **accept it because they are very much eager to satisfy Kṛṣṇa.** This is perfect civilization....

This verse, therefore, advises that **everyone become a member of the Āryan civilization** and accept the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. **One should conduct his social, political and religious affairs according to His instructions. We are spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to try to establish a society the way that Kṛṣṇa wants it.** This is the meaning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

>> SB 6.16.43, purport

**[END to my reply]**

No, male bodies don't transfer to female bodies. In the same way, a male's transformation from sudra to brahmana is not physical. It is a transformation of the subtle body. There is no basis in sastra to say that the same transformation does not occur when women become Vaishnavi brahmans. To think women remain women is the bodily concept of life.

Srila Prabhupada said to Vishaka devi, "Anyone who thinks they are a woman is less intelligent." Similarly, any man who thinks a woman is a woman must also be less intelligent.

Srila Prabhupada clearly made no spiritual distinction between his male and female brahminically initiated disciples. He instructed Saradiya, a twice initiated disciple, to give her husband Vaikunthanath the Gayatri mantra. He said that his female disciples were not ordinary women.

This anti-Vaishnavi bias has caused immense suffering in ISKCON. Husbands feel entitled to beat wives. Female devotees are sometimes harassed by sexual predators in leadership roles. Vaishnavis are treated as second class citizens. My friend who just returned from Vrindavan gave a vivid example. Even today, nearly half the members of SABHA, some of whom have been serving him faithfully for fifty years, would not be

allowed to chant japa in Srila Prabhupada's room during japa time because they are seen as women, not Vaishnavis.

Damodar Prabhu, even if you don't understand or care, the Vaishnavis and at least some of the men on this conference know exactly what I am talking about.

SABHA members, please act to show that men on the highest level of our movement are free of this illusory bodily conception of life. Help fulfill at least in some small way Srila Prabhupada's expressly stated desire that all his sons and daughters acquire the title Bhaktivedanta and with it the right to initiate disciples.

Your servant,  
Kalakantha das ACBSP

PS: At Nrsimhananda Prabhu's request I have done my best to participate in this discussion, though I wanted to approach the topic first among SABHA members. My duties no longer allow me to continue. I will post two more pieces of evidence concerning Vaisnavi diksa gurus, as well as a proposal to cooperate with the GBC body on this matter, and will then have to bow out. My best to all involved.

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 2:51 PM

[pancaratnadas](#)

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, krishnakirti@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com

Cc: brss108@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Is it not exactly what has been said. If you say "what did Prabhupada say" you can find support for any argument that is why we are being told to refer to Sastra.

Sent from my MI MAX 2

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 7:58 PM

**rucira dasi**

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>

To: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Suresvara Dasa <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratudas <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, siddha\_007@163.com, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com

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Dear SABHA members,

Please accept humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

As regards the issue of Vaisnavi diksa guru, a few examples can be gleaned from the scriptures, Jahnavi Mata initiated many disciples into the practice of bhakti. A few other isolated cases can be cited, but there are some mind bugling questions.. If Srila Prabhupada had wanted his female disciples to initiate why is it that when he named the twelve devotees as initiating gurus he did not include any female disciple? Is it that non of the female disciples were mature enough to do that service? If Vaisnavis are allowed to initiate are they going to initiate only ladies or both sexes? If they will initiate both men and women how will they handle brahmana initiations for their male disciples?

Your servant,

Rucira DD.

On Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 12:16 AM Sati devi dasi <[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear SABHA members and guests,  
please accept my humble obeisance



All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

Our Chairman, Nrsimhananda prabhu, who has initiated the discussion of the topic of Vaishnavi Diksha Gurus, decided to move the conversation from SABHA Forum to the email format as he would like to invite to this conversation Vaishnavas who are not SABHA members, namely Krishna Kirti prabhu and Damodara prabhu. These devotees are designated spokespersons for the issue, as well as widely recognized scholars. We would like to welcome them here.

To send a message to this email string, please do not forget to use **"Reply to All"** button. Thank you!

with love,  
ys Sati dd

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 8:36 PM

**Carl Woodham**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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The short film "She Can Become Guru," released three years ago, included an invitation to take part in an online survey. 550 viewers replied. Those who replied remained

anonymous but supplied the following information:

Male	249 (45.4%)
Female	298 (54.3%)
Between the ages of 18–35	198 (36.1%)
Between the ages of 36–50	157 (28.6%)
Over age 51	186 (33.9%)
An initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada	97 (17.7%)
An initiated granddisciple of Srila Prabhupada	283 (51.5%)
An active follower of Srila Prabhupada for more than twenty years	239 (43.5%)
An active follower of Srila Prabhupada for less than twenty years	188 (34.2%)
An adult child of devotee parents	94 (17.1%)
Of Indian descent	67 (12.2%)
An officer in a North American ISKCON corporation	37 (6.7%)
An officer in an ISKCON corporation somewhere other than North America.	32 (5.8%)
Regularly engaged in some form of outreach, such as harinama, book distribution, teaching, or counseling	320 (58.3%)
Serving in the country where I was born	285 (51.9%)

Respondents were based in:

North America: 63%

Europe: 20%

India: 7%

Australasia: 3.3%

South America: 3.1%

Asia outside of India: 2.2%

Africa: 1%

"She Can Become Guru," a film named after a direct quote from Srila Prabhupada, was clearly available to and viewed by opponents of Vaishnavi diksa gurus, because it spawned several short rebuttal films, entitled:

"Can She Become Guru?"

"She Can't Become Guru."

"She Can Become Chaste."

To my knowledge, none of the producers of these films ever surveyed their viewers to see what they thought.

A link to the original film is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k99idDaGOY>

Your servant,  
Kalakantha das ACBSP

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 9:42 PM

**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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On Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 8:36 PM Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com> wrote:

The short film "She Can Become Guru," released three years ago, included an invitation to take part in an online survey. 550 viewers replied.

Yes, that is called a convenience sample. It is not representative of ISKCON's population. That means you cannot generalize the results to apply to the rest of ISKCON. It represents some of the people who watched your video and felt inspired to take your survey. It leaves out the rest who for whatever reason didn't watch your film or did not take your survey.

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 10:19 PM

**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>  
Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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On Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 2:51 PM pancaratnadas <[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)> wrote:

Is it not exactly what has been said. If you say "what did Prabhupada say" you can find support for any argument that is why we are being told to refer to Sastra.

This is the point. It's easy to go in any direction if you have only one source. It's like having a single point, and you can draw any number of lines through it.

Here's a real-world example of that:

The important point is that although the ritvik system may be totally unique, . . . it does not violate higher order sastric principles. It is testament to Srila Prabhupada's genius that he was able to mercifully apply such sastric principles in new and novel ways according to time, place, and circumstance. (*The Final Order*)

Note that *ṛtvik-vāda* is a system of initiations supported extensively with Śrīla

Prabhupāda's statements, but it is not supported anywhere by *śāstra* our our *ācāryas*. But the one we follow at present is supported by *śāstra* and our *ācāya*'s.

So, when we wrote our paper on the injunctions of *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* and its injunctions pertaining to female *dīkṣā-gurus*, we wanted to showcase a means of understanding Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions that avoided the trap the *ṛtvik-vādīs* fell into.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dāsa

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 10:19 PM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos -

NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,

Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,

Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles -

USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna

Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi

<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯

<siddha\_007@163.com>

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Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 10:24 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

&lt;krishnakirti@gmail.com&gt;

To: David Shapiro &lt;nrsimhananda@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Mahatma Das <mahatmada@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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On Fri, Jan 11, 2019 at 10:20 PM David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com> wrote:

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Well, this is also there, too.

But within the domain of science itself the survey was flawed and therefore cannot be used to make inferences about what the rest of ISKCON believes.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Sat, Jan 12, 2019 at 1:39 AM

**Krishnarupa Dasi**

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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A very brief comment made via my phone.

Does it lend absolute weight to the argument of female diksa gurus by referring to what the Sastra says about general women? After all, Srila Prabhupada makes it abundantly clear that when speaking about women, he is not referring to his female disciples. Many times he points out that devotee women are in a special category and not ordinary women..

Second point, please keep in mind that he also said that in this cosmic material manifestation, all the inmates are to be considered prakriti, and not Purusa!

Yr sr

Krishnarupa

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Sat, Jan 12, 2019 at 2:34 AM

**Chris Ostrowski**

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Krishna Kirti and all SABHA,

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Srila Rupa Gosvami states that his elder brother (Sanatana Gosvami) has compiled Hari-bhakti-vilasa for the guidance of the Vaisnavas and therein has mentioned many rules and regulations to be followed by the Vaisnavas. Some of them are very important and prominent, and Srila Rupa Gosvami will now mention these very important items for our benefit. **The purport of this statement is that Srila Rupa Gosvami proposes to mention only basic principles, not details. For example, a basic principle is that one has to accept a spiritual master. Exactly how one follows the instructions of his spiritual master is considered a detail. For example, if one is following the instruction of his spiritual master and that instruction is different from the instructions of another spiritual master, this is called detailed information. But the basic principle of acceptance of a spiritual master is good everywhere, although the details may be different. Srila Rupa Gosvami does not wish to enter into details here, but wants to place before us only the principles. [Nectar of Devotion 6 "How to discharge Devotional Service"]**

As we will come to see, some things in the practice of Devotional Service will be Principles (which can never be changed, because they are Sanatana-Dharma) and some will be Details (which must be changed to stay up with the times—Desha, Kala & Patra). If we change Principles, we are lost and if we do not change Details we are also lost. We are between the rock and the hard place. But that is Devotional Service—it is a razors edge.

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simplified way of seeing the issue and a rule of the thumb.

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The simple take-away is that unpurified people cannot be Diksa Guru, purified people can. We have also heard from Prabhupada that one who is Siddha or "Following-the-Siddha" can be Diksa. If this is true for Men, then it must be true for Women as well. This is why Prabhupada could quote Scripture which describes the defects of Women as a general class and yet at the same time say that Women who have taken to Krishna Consciousness are NOT ordinary Women. They have transcended the Demographic class of general Women. They do not need to magically grow a male-organ to able to do so.

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transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program. [1/3/1969 Letter to Hansadutta]

Prabhupada meant what he said and he SPECIFICALLY added the feminine gender on other occasions. Whether Women wear or don't wear brahmana threads, is a Detail. The frailties of Women as a Demographic class is beside the point. We do not have to resort to one or two quotes, which get re-interpreted to say that "Once-a-Woman-always-a-Woman." To portray that Women, if purified, can perform Diksa is straightforward, and many quotes can be found, both from Prabhupada and Scripture. The Dhruva passage [SB 4.12.32] is again in line with quotes that Prabhupada makes from Sastra about the "General-Demographic-Disqualification" for Women who are unpurified, that is all. In [*Did Prabhupada Want Women Diksa Gurus?* page 39], Kaunteya shares the photo of the original pre-edited version of Prabhupada's words which show that "Woman-ness" is not the main reason that Prabhupada gave that Suniti could not initiate her son, rather it was that she was a relative.

So basically, I will stop, though I plan to write something more complete at a later time (I know, thanks for the warning.) Understanding that a Woman can transcend her nature is not non-Sastric. Understanding that she cannot transcend, would need much supporting evidence and someone would have to explain to me how in *Bhagavad-Gita*, we say that "We are not these bodies" when what we really mean is "Men only are not their bodies, however Women are their bodies."

your servant,

Candrasedkhara Swami

**From:** Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 11, 2019 11:49 AM

**To:** pancaratnadas

**Cc:** Mahatma Das; Carl Woodham; Bhakti Rasayana Sagar; Rukmini Walker; Damodara Dasa; David Shapiro; Sati devi dasi; Krishnarupa Dasi; Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami; Narahari; Richard Hall; Ajita Cozzi; Atmanivedana Swami; BB Keshava Swami; Bhakti Anugraha Janardana

Swami; BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG); Chris Ostrowski; Dhruva Kusa Shah; Divya Priya; Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA); Kratu Das; Madhuri Pura Dasa; Mahaman (das) ACBSP; Mahatma Das; rucira dasi; 徐达斯; janavi devi; Sri Oppecini; Vrnda dd

**Subject:** Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

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Sat, Jan 12, 2019 at 2:35 AM

**[Chris Ostrowski](#)**

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Many thanks to HH Candrasekhara Mahārāja for this very thoughtful explanation. I can sign under every word of it.

Another point referring to the given Bharadwaja Samhita quotes is that it defines women who can be Diksha Gurus as Siddhas, but the interpretation of the paper's authors of what the term "Siddha" suppose to mean - seeing Krishna face to face - is not how Bhagavad Gita 7.4 explains it:

manuṣyāṅgāṁ sahasreṣu  
kaścid yatati siddhaye  
yatatām api siddhānām  
kaścin māṁ vetti tattvataḥ

**Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.**

And from the purport of Srila Prabhupada it's quite clear that Siddha can refer to any transcendentalist out of whom Krishna's devotees are the best. So it appears to be a very generic term easily applicable to any devotee of any gender, and to insist that it only refers to someone who is seeing Krishna face to face seems to be rather manipulative.

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

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Sat, Jan 12, 2019 at 7:37 PM



**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

See below my reply (in red) to Chandrasekhara Maharaja's email.

I have tried to keep the reply small and thus not addressed all points. More to come.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

Dear Krishna Kirti and all SABHA,

Yes, but the real issue is a bit deeper than that. This debate, and many others like it, deeply rest on another underlying issue. That issue is: "What is Principle and what is Detail?" We will face this same issue in many forms as ISKCON goes into the future. At this juncture of the exchange, now we can see how a particular underlying foundation comes into play. Since now you and also Professor Hopkins have raised a question that points to this underpinning, I do not have to do the prerequisite prelude to explaining why we need to take this seeming tangent. It is not a tangent; it is germane.

It is not as simple as quoting Srila Prabhupada (then again everything rests on Prabhupada) AND it is



not as simple as quoting Scripture and using your interpretation of Scripture, make it bubble forth from Prabhupada's mouth. Because you interpret Scripture in a certain way, doesn't mean I have to assume THAT interpretation is correct and THEREFORE Prabhupada MUST have agreed with that interpretation because Prabhupada would never contradict Scripture.

I believe the issue is: "What is Principle and what is Detail?"

Before this, the issue is, "What is the authority? On what basis do we decide anything as not INTERPRETATION but TRUTH?" Without answering this, you always remain in the cloud of speculation—even in deciding what is principle and what is detail, one must be based on authority rather than "I would reply simply." Then another may say "but I would reply simply this way" and yet another will say that "but I would reply simply that way..." and it goes on and on without any authority.

Srila Rupa Gosvami states that his elder brother (Sanatana Gosvami) has compiled Hari-bhakti-vilasa for the guidance of the Vaisnavas and therein has mentioned many rules and regulations to be followed by the Vaisnavas. Some of them are very important and prominent, and Srila Rupa Gosvami will now mention these very important items for our benefit. The purport of this statement is that Srila Rupa Gosvami proposes to mention only basic principles, not details. For example, a basic principle is that one has to accept a spiritual master. Exactly how one follows the instructions of his spiritual master is considered a detail. For example, if one is following the instruction of his spiritual master and that instruction is different from the instructions of another spiritual master, this is called detailed information. But the basic principle of acceptance of a spiritual master is good everywhere, although the details may be different. Srila Rupa Gosvami does not wish to enter into details here, but wants to place before us only the principles. [Nectar of Devotion 6 "How to discharge Devotional Service"]

Besides this, the details are to be selected from sastras. One cannot say that he will select a detail that goes against sastras. Srila Prabhupada here speaks about Hari-bhakti-vilasa from where Rupa Gosvami has taken this section. He says that details are mentioned in Hari-bhakti-vilasa and one who is going to follow a particular principle (from the mentioned 64) has to go and see these details from Hari-bhakti-vilasa and act accordingly, not whimsically. That means details are not unimportant and thus for us to imagine or speculate for adjustment.

For instance a full chapter is given mentioning types of flowers and leaves to be used in service of Lord in different seasons and also which types are prohibited. Also mentioned there is what to do in cases prescribed flowers are not available.

So, the principle is that Lord should be offered flowers. How to do that is a matter of details described in Hari-bhakti-vilasa and those who are to follow this principle need to resort to Hari-bhakti-vilasa and take details from there. It no way means that the details are not important.

In case one is not capable to acquire recommended flowers, then there is also detail to which other flowers one can use. Thus according to Time, place, and circumstance one has to select a particular detail from the sastras to be able to follow the principle. One cannot say that he will select a detail that goes against sastras. Thus even adjusting according to time place and circumstance should be based on sastras.

Please consider this conversation of Srila Prabhupada:

**Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa: Is it necessary from time to time to change the smṛtis?**

**Prabhupāda: That cannot be changed.**

**Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa: Smṛti cannot be changed?**

**Prabhupāda:** Nothing can be changed. But according to the time you have to... Just like in Kali-yuga the smṛti order is kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet [SB 12.3.51]. So you have to do this. Just like a physician gives a medicine that "Morning you take this medicine, in the evening you take this medicine." It is not a change of treatment. It is according to the time

a different medicine. But it is recommended by the physician, not by your whims. **Śruti-smṛti cannot be changed, but they have recommended different process in different times. So the reference to the śruti-smṛti is there, authority is there. It is... You cannot modify.**

...But smṛti is smṛti. It is not new. **You have to give reference to the past śruti-smṛti. Otherwise, it is not... Veda pramāṇa, śabda pramāṇa.** Otherwise there is no evidence. **It is invalid,** not valid. **You cannot change the original śruti-smṛti, but you have to take the timely recommendation.** Just like Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam, kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva... [Ādi 17.21]. This is the only method. You take it. But this is śruti-smṛti-pramāṇa.

...there cannot be new smṛtis. **We are giving the sanction to Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra because it is already there in the śruti.** But for this time it is suitable. **I am taking a certain type of medicine in the evening, it is already recommended by the physician. I am not doing it whimsically. So whimsically you cannot change. It must have reference to the śruti-smṛti-purāṇadi.**

**Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa:** Can anyone change...

...the rules of conduct as regarded in the smṛtis?

**Prabhupāda:** Nobody can change. Nobody can change. But **rules and regulation for different times, different circumstances are there in the śruti-smṛti. We have to take it. You cannot change.**

*>> Answers to a Questionnaire from Bhavans Journal, Vrindavana, Jun 28, 1976*

Now for the case of accepting a spiritual master (which Srila Prabhupada calls a principle), for the details about how to accept a spiritual master one must resort to Hari-bhakti-vilasa; and there we go—we find standard rules and regulations mentioned from different sastras. Hari-bhakti-vilasa itself derives its initiation process from Pancaratras and thus for information which is not clarified even from Hari-bhakti-vilasa we resort to its sources, the Narada pancaratras. Female-diksa-guru is one such issue. Thus by the rule of *anukto'nyatra grāhyaḥ* [1] and *paroktaṁ cāvirodhaḥ* [2], we need to import the detail of eligibility of genders for becoming diksa-guru from where it is explicitly mentioned. Thus, when we do this, we get female devotees prohibit from becoming diksa-gurus. (remember, the Bharadvaja samhita is already speaking about only devotees to become guru, as clarified in 1.41; and thus women etc. mentioned there are also devotees)

[1] *anukto'nyatra grāhyaḥ* — details that are not mentioned in parent text should be brought from another text where they are mentioned

[2] *paroktaṁ cāvirodhaḥ*—unless they are not against the maxims parent text]

[END of my reply so as not to make it too long. More to come.]

FYI, sastras (Vedic Hermeneutics) fully guide us about how to distinguish adjustable details from principle and non-adjustable details and we have developed a procedure in this regard without trying to speculate in any way about what is adjustable detail and what non-adjustable detail and principle. In course of time we will share that document. It is interesting and forms a principle-detail tree: for instance one should perform kirtana is principle and details are that one may chant japa, have nagara sankirtana, etc. If one takes japa then it is principle and detail is that how many rounds to chant, etc.

and so on.

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## [SABHA 2019] Fwd: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

Inbox

☆ Sat, Jan 12, 2019 at 10:27 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**  
<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa  
<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, pancaratnadas  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti  
Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David  
Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati

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devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti  
Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana  
Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa  
Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya  
Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma  
(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura  
Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman  
(das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira  
dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
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Let me be perfectly clear: Bharadvaja

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Samhita does NOT state...circumstance. I have either been misquoted or misunderstood. The issue of VDG is so polarizing that the importance of being crystal clear in our communications is very important. Where did you get the idea that I said that the Bharadvaja Samhita says "Women cannot be guru under any circumstance?"

Dear Candrasekhar Maharaja and others, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I do appreciate your lengthy response, laying out your ideas about how one should understand śāstra and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Before I say more, there are some important formalities with the correspondence itself that need to be addressed.

Let me be perfectly clear: Bharadvaja Samhita does NOT say "women cannot be guru under any circumstance," nor have I ever said that that it does. For example, you wrote, 'You portray that our Bharadvaja Samhita states unequivocally that "Women cannot be guru under any circumstance."' I have either been misquoted or misunderstood. The issue of



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VDG is so polarizing that the importance of being crystal clear in our communications is very important. Where did you get the idea that I said that the Bharadvaja Samhita says "Women cannot be guru under any circumstance?"

But the fact is I have never said that. In fact, our paper makes the case that there *are* circumstances under which women can be *dīkṣā-guru*. Our paper leads with that case, in fact. Moreover, the thesis of our paper is the verses from Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā reconcile all three kinds of statements SP makes about women's eligibility to be *dīkṣā-guru* (can be, cannot be, is rare or special case) are simultaneously true without need for speculating about what SP meant--their direct meaning, or *mukhya-vṛtti*, is retained. So, what good does it do to say that I'm saying that Bharadvaja Samhita states unequivocally that "Women cannot be guru under any circumstance"?

I understand that VDG/FDG is a very polarizing issue. So, if all of us could be a little more careful in quoting what others say, then I'm sure our exchanges can eventually produce more light than heat.

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Sun, Jan 13, 2019 at  
2:21 AM

**Bhakti Rasayana Sagar**

<brss108@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Chris

Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,  
pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Rukmini

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Rukmini

Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd

<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Prabhus, Damodara and Krishna Kirti.

Would you be kind enough to explain why do you interpret the word “Siddha” in the text as categorically meaning “one, who is seeing Krishna face to face”, as opposed to just a devotee of Krishna?

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

Sent from my iPhone

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Sun, Jan

13, 2019

at 5:01

AM



**Chris Ostrowski**

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,

Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David

Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati  
devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti  
Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana  
Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa  
Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya  
Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma  
(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura  
Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman  
(das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira  
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<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
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Dear Krishna Kirti,

Yes, you are correct, which is partly the point that I wanted to make. The *Bharadvaja Samhita* indeed does not make that statement, you do (Just as you have the burden of proof, so do I have the burden of proof in exegesis as well). But more precisely, you state that *Bharadvaja Samhita* reads, according to your understanding, that non-Siddha-Women cannot become Diksa under any circumstance. Sorry for the inaccuracy, when we write we tend to omit certain words that we imagine are understood, just to make the writing a little shorter, but I wholly agree with you that we should not. I will try to spell things out more precisely in future replies and affirmations and if I fail I will rephrase, just call it to my attention. For two people on opposite sides of a controversy, it is imperative that they develop a commonly-agreed language or they will simply fight straw-man arguments on both sides.

Thank you for this interchange; I welcome the opportunity to discuss this topic further. Please note however that I am in the middle of delivering a version of the ISKCON Disciples Course, which has turned out to be more of an endeavor than I realized beforehand. I will try to timely reply, but sometimes that may not be so timely. I wish to write something more complete and in depth, but I have been prevented from that task by my present commitment to the IDC.

your servant,

Candrasedkhara Swami

---

**From:** Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Saturday, January 12, 2019 11:57 AM

**To:** Damodara Dasa

**Cc:** Chris Ostrowski; pancaratnadas; Mahatma Das; Carl Woodham; Bhakti Rasayana Sagar; Rukmini Walker; David Shapiro; Sati devi dasi; Krishnarupa Dasi; Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami; Narahari; Richard Hall; Ajita Cozzi; Atmanivedana Swami; BB Keshava Swami; Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami; BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG); Dhruva Kusa Shah; Divya Priya; Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA); Kratu Das; Madhuri Pura Dasa; Mahaman (das) ACBSP; Mahatma Das; rucira dasi; 徐达斯; janavi devi; Sri Oppecini; Vrnda dd

**Subject:** Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

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**Chris Ostrowski**

Sun, Jan  
13, 2019

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com> at 5:48 AM

To: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,

Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David

Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati

devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana

Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti

Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa

Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya

Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma



(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura  
Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman  
(das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira  
dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Damodara,

Thank you for your reply. I am happy to get into this subject deeper and I think the overall subject of Hermeneutics is a MOST important topic for us to discuss in ISKCON. Thank you for this opportunity. If you have some writings in electronic format or even physical, could you point me to them? I would consider a great favor and be in you debt. I am not asking for a freebie, you can perhaps show me where to obtain such information.

I am not completely convinced that Nyaya or other sastras of the type are indisputable, but I feel as a movement we need to base our adjudication of Sat and Asat on firmer ground. These writings may play a role. On the other hand Prabhupada never laid a great deal of stress on these types of procedures, yet what is Absolute Truth and what is Relative Truth need to be defined and we need to be able to classify into which category a particular item belongs. Authority, Hermeneutics, Sat-Asat, Principle-Detail, Absolute and Relative; all these are part of the same question.

We hear that some items written in the great literary culture of the Vedas are Absolute and others are Relative. That is why we hear about the process of Desha, Kala and Patra. In other words, updating some items to the current time or also updating some items for the current local situation. Some Details must be adjusted according to Desha, Kala and Patra. On a different point, we need to discuss if the *Bharadvaja Samhita*, for instance, really does say what you and Krishna Kirti say it says. I have my doubts. As I said before, would not this

Principle (no-non-Siddha-Women-Diksa), if indeed it is a Principle, be more abundantly available if it were the Absolute Truth? Would not it align more often with other more common scripture? Are we not this body or only Men are not their bodies? Because I can cite a Sanskrit name for something, does that make it indisputable? If I cannot cite a Sanskrit name for something does that mean it must be mental speculation?

As I mentioned to Krishna Kirti, I am involved in an ISKCON Disciples Course presentation and it has really become more than I bargained for. Hopefully by next week, we will have overcome many of the bugs in the system and tweaked it to a more workable form. I hope to write something more complete on the subject of Vaisnavi-Diksa, and to deal with the underpinning issues such a Hermeneutics as well.

your servant,

Candrasekhara Swami

---

**From:** Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Saturday, January 12, 2019 9:07 AM

**To:** Chris Ostrowski

**Cc:** Krishna Kirti Das; pancaratnadas; Mahatma Das; Carl Woodham; Bhakti Rasayana Sagar; Rukmini Walker; David Shapiro; Sati devi dasi; Krishnarupa Dasi; Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami; Narahari; Richard Hall; Ajita Cozzi; Atmanivedana Swami; BB Keshava Swami; Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami; BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG); Dhruva Kusa Shah; Divya Priya; Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA); Kratu Das; Madhuri Pura Dasa; Mahaman (das) ACBSP; Mahatma Das; rucira dasi; 徐达斯; janavi devi; Sri Oppecini; Vrnda dd

**Subject:** Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

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**David Shapiro**

<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>

To: Chris Ostrowski

<[chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com)>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>, Krishna Kirti

Sun, Jan 13,  
2019 at 7:34  
AM

Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma

Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira  
dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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I feel hopeful. The discussion is drilling deep into foundational issues. I am so grateful to be party to this interchange. I appreciate the articulation and sincerity of all participants. I find the exploration to be exciting, revealing, profound, civil - and just what has been missing from all the "he said, she said" articles on the subject. Please carry on. We are bound to hit water, oil, or gold - something that will be of benefit to everyone.

YS, Nrsimhananda das

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 13,  
2019 at 3:02  
PM

To: Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,  
Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd

<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

Respected Chandrasekhara Maharaja,

>> the overall subject of Hermeneutics is a MOST important topic for us to discuss in ISKCON.

Exactly. I am very grateful to Chandrasekhara Maharaja to bring the us to the real point of discussion. This is what must be done. VDG is just one of many controversial issues and if ISKCON is able to sort out its Hermeneutics side, I am able to see how we all will be able to appreciate Srila Prabhupada as the true messenger of the sastras and parampara.

We have already worked to some extent on this. Now we would like to take a couple of days (or one more) to properly arrange it and present in a way that the members here are able to easily understand it and help them apply it in different cases (case studies). I will be preparing (not so) short emails to share this in a few doses. Hope devotees here will be benefited.



I request that we approach the Hermeneutics, etc. discussion leaving our pro- or anti- FDG understandings on side, in order to give a neutral ear to it. I also propose if I can start this discussion in a new thread which will be solely for that discussion.

### **Discussion of Hermeneutics will involve:**

1. Need to Harmonize Guru-sadhu-sastra and how the correct approach saves us from undermining SP
2. The science of Evidence: Includes different levels of evidences, their relative authoritativeness, cases of contradiction, types of statements, etc.
3. The science of Harmonization: Case studies based on point #2 with rules explained on the go
4. Principle, detail, Time, Place, Circumstance, and the science of adjustment
5. How SP practically applied point #4

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

**My Introduction:** I am serving at a Gurukula and Vedic Village in Gujarat, India. My services are teaching sastras to children and researching from sastras, tradition, and paramparas in order to be able to plan for our varnasrama communities as per the desire and instructions of Srila Prabhupada. On our shoulders is the responsibility of practically making work the varnasrama system; what Srila Prabhupada has so untiringly and exhaustively described in his books and instructions.

Thus for me research is a work not directed to defeat some other scholars and establish what I think as correct. My opponents are not human beings but material nature or, more precisely, my misunderstandings. If our research fails then the result will be failure of implementing varnasrama; it won't work.

Thus we are forced to think in depth and trying to really understand what is truth lest the result will be failure.

In this effort we have come across traditional techniques to understand guru-sadhu-sastras and which are working well.

I am reading many sastras in my research

and the more I am reading the more I am getting convinced of the authority of Srila Prabhupada and about how he acted and directed our movement. Many of the famous adjustments he made, I am able to see how he was acting as per sastras and sadhu.

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 13,  
2019 at 5:33  
PM

To: Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,

Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David

Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati

devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada

Please find session one below. I have tried my best to be clear. Faults are mine; any

# credits are of my Guru Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada, and Parampara.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

Session 1: How to Harmonize Guru-sādhu-śāstra without undermining Srila Prabhupada

**Size:** Two to three A4 pages. **To see Summary (click here)**

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Thākura says, sādhu-śāstra-guru-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya. One should accept a thing as genuine by studying the words of saintly people, the spiritual master and the śāstra. **The actual center is the śāstra, the revealed scripture. If a spiritual master does not speak according to the revealed scripture, he is not to be accepted. Similarly, if a saintly person does not speak according to the śāstra, he is not a saintly person. The śāstra is the center for all.** Unfortunately, at the present moment, people do not refer to the śāstras

— Cc 2.20.352, purport

Seeing the above quote, a genuine devotee may become uncomfortable and think, “*now they are going to bring something from sastra and try to prove what they think right, minimizing or even rejecting the authority of Srila Prabhupada.*” The opposing party will also do the same thing and fight will go on with quotes supporting each party and no conclusions at all. (Eg. Hrdayananda Maharaja’s case)

Unfortunately, same is the case in ISKCON for the statements of Srila Prabhupada. Devotees subscribe to one opinion, search for instructions of Srila Prabhupada supporting it and then compile them to present his case minimizing the sastras’ and sadhus’ instructions. The opposing party does the same thing, and again, no conclusion. (Eg. Hrtvik movement)

Similarly we find this problem even in sticking only to the sadhu evidence. (Eg. “Jiva’s falling down or not” issue)

Above three are actually the cases of rejecting the quote of Prabhupada we opened with. In all these cases devotees failed to do “aikya” or harmonization of evidences from all the three sources; they chose to stick with only one or at the max two. Neither do they know any genuine procedure to be able to harmonize save and except their logic, which is not trained as per vedic standards.

## How to go about Harmonization?

So our process is that: sādhu-guru-śāstra. We have to accept everything through saintly person, confirmed by the scripture, and described or explained by guru. Then it is perfect. **The scriptures are already there, and we have to see how the scriptures are being followed by saintly persons. And if there is any difficulty, they should be explained by the spiritual master. Then it is perfect. Sādhu-guru-śāstra-vākya, tinete kariyā aikya. Scriptures you cannot**

**understand directly. Then you have to see how the scriptural injunctions are being followed by saintly persons.** Even if you cannot understand, then the spiritual master will explain to you.

— Philosophy discussions / Discussions with Syamasundara dasa, The Evolutionists

**Guru** = Srila Prabhupada (at least for the his disciples)

**Sadhu** = Acharyas of our sampradaya, other sampradayas, and good people of varnasrama tradition [good people are strictly defined and we may not discuss it here]

**Sastra** = Whole vedic body starting with Sruti, Smriti (Dharma-sastras like Manu samhita), itahasa, purana, pancaratras, etc.

Sastras are already there. Say we are reading them.

*What if I find something from sastras that directly contradicts with Srila Prabhupada's instruction?*

Any statement has a direct meaning (mukhyā vṛtti) and indirect meanings (lakṣaṇā vṛttis). First step would be to fully try to see if the contradiction can be removed without resorting to any kind of lakṣaṇā vṛtti (inference, interpretation or anumāna). This can be done if we get some direct statement from sādhu or śāstra that solves the matter [see one example of SP doing it at the end of session]. In case of failure to do that a genuine contradiction is generated and then:

*There are only 3 possibilites:*

- a) Srila Prabhupada is Wrong (as sastra is in center)
- b) Our understanding of Sastras is Wrong
- c) Our understanding of Srila Prabhupada is wrong

**Possibility of 'a' is zero;** We cannot be in ISKCON if we accept it; He is undoubtedly above 4-defects.

Thus we are left with the possibilities b & c.

**Let's investigate 'b':**

SP—"Then you have to see how the scriptural injunctions are being followed by saintly persons."

*See whether what we understand from instruction of sastra is also the understanding of sadhus?*

**If yes**, then it is proved that our understanding of Srila Prabhupada was wrong

**If no**, then it is proved that our understanding of sastra was wrong

*What is wrong if we just stick to Prabhupada?*

The problem is that although SP is above 4-defects we are not, and thus many times we **may misunderstand his instructions and go off the track**. The very fact that there are controversies in ISKCON and that both the sides base themselves on the instructions of SP, shows that one of them has misunderstood SP. Thus Prabhupada says—

Just like in the railway line you see two parallel lines. If they are in order, the railway carriages are carried very smoothly to the destination. Here also, there are three parallel lines—sādhu, śāstra, guru: saintly person, association of saintly person; acceptance of bona fide spiritual master, and faith in the scriptures. That's all. **Then your carriage will**



be going nicely, without any disturbance.

—Oct 18, 1968, Seattle, Lecture:

**Thus the system of guru-sādhu-śāstra is a check and balance to be on track.**

*What to do with the instruction that we have misunderstood? Should we reject it? Won't that be an offense?*

**No.** We don't reject it. But we understand that the purpose of sadhus and gurus cannot be different from that of sastras. Thus **we have to resort to *lakṣaṇā vṛtti* or interpretation** of that particular statement according to the laws of interpretation mentioned in *mīmāṃsā śāstras*; for instance, to depend on least possible number of assumptions in the hypothesis we frame. Anyway, that is a detailed topic.

[Note: In case guru is not liberated person free from 4-defects then his statement is to be rejected as faulty if it clashes with that from the other two. Same is the case for the evidences of sense perception and inference—if they clash with any of guru-sādhu- or śāstra, they are to be rejected as faulty.]

The logic behind this is that—

- All instructions of guru, sādhu, and śāstras present the same truth and thus there is a continuum in the whole body of information. This is technically called *ekavākyatā*, which Śrīla Prabhupāda calls here “aikya.” Thus harmonization is must.
- Now, in case of genuine contradiction between instructions, it is imperative to interpret one statement or others, if we want to harmonize
- The only question left is that which statement is to be interpreted.
- So the quote from SP we mentioned in the beginning, gives us direction in this matter—śāstras always have to be taken in their direct meaning while other statements need to be interpreted in case of controversy.
- How SP comes to this conclusion, we will see in our next session: The science of Evidence

END for now. This was the first dose. Step-by-step we will carefully try to understand.

## Session 1: Summary

- Only by following the trio of guru-sadhu-sastra can one know things surely
- Sastra is the center of trio
- Clinging to only one of three will just end in quote fights without conclusion
  - Only śāstra (Eg. Hridayananda Maharaja's issue)
  - Only SP (Eg. Rtvik issue)
  - Only sādhu (Eg. “Jīva fell down or not” issue)
- Reason is that we failed to do “aikya” or harmonization in want of proper hermeneutic procedures as well as trained logic according to Vedic standards
- How to go about doing harmonization?
  - Sastras = Sruti, Smriti (Dharma-sastras like Manu samhita), Puranas, Itihasas, pancaratras, etc.
  - Sadhu = All Sampradaya acaryas and good men of Varnasrama tradition.
  - Guru = Srila Prabhupada (at least for his disciples);
- **What if a statement of sastra contradicts Srila Prabhupada's?**

**Mukhya-vṛtti** = direct meaning of statement;

**Lakṣaṇā vṛtti** = indirect or interpreted meanings of statement

*First of all, try to solve without resorting to lakṣaṇā of any statement, by trying to get some direct references from sadhu or sastra that directly (in its mukhya-vṛtti) solves the contradiction.*

• In case of failure to do that there is genuine contradiction and thus there are 3 possibilities—

- Srila Prabhupada is Wrong
- Our understanding of Sastras is Wrong
- Our understanding of Srila Prabhupada is Wrong

• Option 'a' is not acceptable lest we must be out of ISKCON. We are left with b & c

• Then we have to see whether our understanding of sastric statement is same as what sadhus understand in this regard?

**If Yes**, then our understanding of Srila Prabhupada is Wrong

**If No**, then our understanding of Sastras is Wrong

• **What's wrong if we stick just to Prabhupada?**

Although Prabhupada is free from 4-defects we are not and thus we may misunderstand him and go off the track. Thus, guru-sadhu-sastra is the check and balance system which, as Srila Prabhupada explains, are like parallel lines of a railway track which keep our train on the track.

• **What to do with the instruction we have not understood?**

We have to interpret it (do lakṣaṇā vṛtti with) applying the standard rules of interpretation given in mīmāṃsā śāstras. It is a detailed topic we won't deal with at this moment

• **Why resort to lakṣaṇā?**

- When there is a genuine contradiction, it cannot be solved without interpreting either one statement or other.
- The only question remains is which one to interpret?
- Prabhupada gives answer that sastra is to be always taken in its direct meaning and others are to be interpreted accordingly
- How Prabhupada comes to this conclusion from sastras itself, we will see in our next session

*How SP Solved contradiction in sastras and sadhu by direct statements from them:*

- It is well known and well documented in sastras that Varṇa is decided by janma or birth
- Deciding Varṇa by birth (as almost the sole condition) was an established norm in varnasrama society of both vaisnavas and non-vaisnavas
- But there were also examples whose varṇas were decided from qualities although they were not qualified by birth. Eg. Satyakama Jabala was made brahmana
- Thus a doubt is generated even in the minds of great souls like Yudhisthira and thus he asks on a few occasions the true criteria for judging one's varna. The answers given were qualities and work.
- But sruti itself says that birth is the qualification and sadhus or tradition follows that from time immemorial and great sages like Vyasadeva support it
- At very few places it is said that varna is to be judged by qualities (like Bg 4.13 and SB 7.11.35)
- What to do?

- Here comes statements from sastras which clarify this—
- By Strictly following the process of saṁskāras that are enjoined for one's varṇa and by strictly following one's own dharma, a soul that is of similar quality to father's will take shelter of that house and thus varṇa of that progeny can be fixed from that of his father.
- Thus both types of statements found in sastras as well as tradition (sadhu) are justified
- Please note that in trying to solve this contradiction mukhya vṛtti of the statements of sastras have been kept intact including that of the statement that solves the contradiction. This is the best harmonization as no lakṣaṇā vṛtti is sought.

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**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 13,  
2019 at 7:59  
PM

To: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Krishna  
Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>,  
pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>,  
Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,  
Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>,  
Sati devi

dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa  
Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>,  
Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>,  
Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana  
Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa  
Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya  
Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma  
(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura  
Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman  
(das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira  
dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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I don't understand:

By Strictly following the process of saṁskāras that are enjoined for one's varṇa and by strictly following one's own dharma, a soul that is of similar quality to father's will take shelter of that house and thus varṇa of that progeny can be fixed from that of his father.

Please explain more fully how that clarifies the idea of deciding varna by birth or varna by qualities. Sounds to me like a sudra, for example, by following the samskaras for that varna, gets fixed into the varna of the sudra father. But that soul may have the qualities of

a brahmana? I'm confused.

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 14,  
2019 at 9:31  
AM

To: David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Krishna

Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>,  
pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,  
Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi

dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa

Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana

Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

Thankyou Nrisimhananda Prabhu for this query. I will request others also, if they are not able to understand what I want to say then they can ask so as to be able to understand the following discussion.

My reply below in red:



Your servant,  
damodara das

- \* Say, I am a grihastha.
- \* I am following all the samskaras as enjoined for my varna
- \* I am following my dharma properly
- \* When I am going to beget a child, I perform garbhadhana samskara also (this samskara is connection between me and my child)
- \* Then, by the arrangement of demigods (daiva-netrena) the soul which will take shelter of my semen will have the similar karmic makeup as I have
- \* Thus his potent qualities will also be similar to my qualities
- \* Say, if I am a vaisya, then my child will also have qualities of vaisya but potent form, not fully manifest until he reaches a particular age
- \* Thus, without waiting for his qualities to fully manifest I can start training him for fitting occupation
- \* This is how, varna, although ultimately dependent on qualities, practically it was seen from birth and it worked.
- \* In kaliyuga, samskaras are undone; thus any soul is placed in any father without

match of qualities.

\* Thus, now judging varna by birth cannot work.

Side point:

We should NOT mistake those who are born in western countries, from mleccha father, are mlecchas. There are brahmanas also born of mleccha fathers and practically in our KC mission many brahmanas have come from mleccha family background. Many of the current ISKCON brahmanas were of brahmana aptitude even before their coming to KC. But the training was lacking without which even one who has potent brahmana qualities remains sudra. When they got training they were fully working brahmanas; something which the smartas can't understand.

**[END of reply]**

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Chris Ostrowski

Mon, Jan 14,  
2019 at 10:10  
AM

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, pancaratnadas <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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## Addendum to Session 1: (For clarification)

- In cases where **Srila Prabhupada directly says “sastras say like this,”** while by our reading sastras we find an opposite understanding, then the only option left is that we have not understood sastra proeprly. We cannot say—
  - a) I have not understood Prabhupada, or
  - b) Prabhupada has not understood sastra

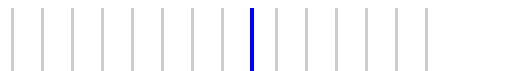
Reason is that we receive sastras through guru and sadhu and thus we keep our understanding of sastras below that of guru’s and sadhu’s understanding of sastra.

- Same is the case with Srila Prabhupada’s direct statements explaining sadhu.
- **Example:** in purport to SB 1.19.6, SP says that according Jiva Gosvami, Praiksit Maharaja sat on the bank of Yamuna where she passes from Delhi. He also explains logic of Jiva Gosvami saying that in those times Yamuna, that passes from Delhi was known as Ganga and only after she reaches Mathura she was known as Yamuna.

Now if you see the commentary of Jiva Gosvami, he quotes a verse from Varaha Puran—*gaṅgā śata-guṇā punyā māthure mama maṅḍale, yamunā viśrutā devī atra kāryā na vicāraṇā*—“Gaṅgā, when flows through mathura, becomes hundred times more sanctified and is known as Yamunā. Of this there should be no doubt.”

But if you go to original Varaha Purana, then there verses, although read the same, are combined differently; the first line of this verese is last line of previous verse there and second line of this verse is first line of next verse there. Thus another meaning that comes out of it is—“Yamuna is a river that flows through Mathura mandala and is hundred times more sanctified than ganga. Of this there should be no doubt.”

Now, as the followers of guru-parampara, we accept the first explanation as SP and Jiva Gosvami has explicitly subscribed to that understanding of sastra. [Attached is the researched article on this topic]



**Pariksit Maharaja sat on the bank of  
Ganga or Yamuna.pdf**  
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Mon, Jan 14, 2019 at 1:40  
PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com,  
damodara.bvks@gmail.com  
Cc: chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
brss108@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
sati.bts@gmail.com,  
krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,  
pdb108@yahoo.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,

Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Dear Krishna Kirti and Damodara Prabhus,

I have a question that will help me clarify your views, and I think it will be useful for all SABHA members as well. I am not writing this as a challenge, but because I want to better understand your position.

Let's say a female Prabhupada disciple has been actively traveling and preaching since she retired from family life 10 years ago. As a result she has a few dozen siksa disciples who are not initiated and have taken shelter of her and want to take diksa from her. They are waiting to see if the GBC will approve her at some point in the future. They have the same relationship with her as other aspiring disciples have with their male diksa gurus. She has been guiding and sheltering her siksa disciples in a similar way as a diksa guru guides and shelters his disciples as well as his aspiring disciples. As such, her disciples are doing well in their Krishna consciousness. She is also doing well and is very inspired to do in this service.

And for this example, let's say we all concur that she is at least on the stage of nistha.

Is your point that she cannot initiate her siksa disciples because she must be above the modes of nature to do this service, even if it appears she is has shown she competent to give shelter to disciples? In other words, doing a good job is not the criteria for her guruship because sastra says only a perfected woman can do this service? (For the sake of this example, let's accept that it appears she is doing as good a job giving shelter to her disciples as her male guru godbrothers>)

Have I correctly represented you?

Your servant,  
Mahatma das

In a message dated 1/12/2019 10:27:23 PM  
India Standard Time,  
[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com) writes:

| Let me be perfectly clear: Bharadvaja



Samhita does NOT state...circumstance. I have either been misquoted or misunderstood. The issue of VDG is so polarizing that the importance of being crystal clear in our communications is very important. Where did you get the idea that I said that the Bharadvaja Samhita says "Women cannot be guru under any circumstance?"

Dear Candrasekhar Maharaja and others, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I do appreciate your lengthy response, laying out your ideas about how one should understand śāstra and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Before I say more, there are some important formalities with the correspondence itself that need to be addressed.

Let me be perfectly clear: Bharadvaja Samhita does NOT say "women cannot be guru under any circumstance," nor have I ever said that that it does. For

example, you wrote, 'You portray that our Bharadvaja Samhita states unequivocally that "Women cannot be guru under any circumstance.'" I have either been misquoted or misunderstood. The issue of VDG is so polarizing that the importance of being crystal clear in our communications is very important. Where did you get the idea that I said that the Bharadvaja Samhita says "Women cannot be guru under any circumstance?"

But the fact is I have never said that. In fact, our paper makes the case that there *are* circumstances under which women can be *dīkṣā-guru*. Our paper leads with that case, in fact. Moreover, the thesis of our paper is the verses from Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā reconcile all three kinds of statements SP makes about women's eligibility to be *dīkṣā-guru* (can be, cannot be, is rare or special case) are simultaneously true without need for speculating about what SP meant-- their direct meaning, or *mukhya-vṛtti*, is retained. So, what good does it do to say that I'm saying that Bharadvaja Samhita states unequivocally that "Women cannot be guru under any circumstance"?

I understand that VDG/FDG is a very polarizing issue. So, if all of us could be a little more careful in quoting what others say, then I'm sure our exchanges can eventually produce more light than heat.

Respectfully,

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa.

On Sat, Jan 12, 2019 at 7:37 PM

Damodara Dasa

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)> wrote:

Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

See below my reply (in red) to  
Chandrasekhara Maharaja's email.

I have tried to keep the reply small and  
thus not addressed all points. More to  
come.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

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Mon, Jan 14, 2019 at 2:28  
PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com

Cc: krishnakirti@gmail.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com,

brss108@gmail.com,

askindredspirits@gmail.com,

nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,

pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Damodara Prabhu,

Let's look at a hypothetical situation that you didn't bring up in your analysis (which btw, I appreciate). I will explain my concerns, and of course, you can address them if you like.

Let's start with a hypothetical situation. You are a woman and Prabhupada personally asks you to initiate. Would you try to reason with Prabhupada that this is not proper, on the basis of sadhu and sastra, or would you just follow his order? In fact, such things like this (of course, maybe not as dramatic as this) did happen in Prabhupada's presence, and no disciple would question the direct order of Prabhupada, even if they felt it was against sadhu and sastra.

So in understanding siddhanta, or proper action or behavior, or acceptable preaching methods we also must consider the heart/desire/mood of Prabhupada, and this is not always going to be the same as his or sastras general instructions on a matter. In other words, in some situations, a disciple may not follow a general instruction because he knows the heart of the guru, i.e. what the guru really wants in that situation. Prabhupada said the first class disciple is one who knows what the guru wants even without the guru asking. My concern is that we don't end up being "over intelligent." Being over intelligent was not an uncommon affair for Prabhupada's disciples during his manifest lila. We have even seen devotees quoting Prabhupada's purports to and other sastra to Prabhupada to disobey a desire of Prabhupada's.

Throughout this entire discussion, this thought is weighing heavy on my mind: we can be so "precise," so "correct," so "siddhantic" that we come to conclusions that Prabhupada didn't intend. I know, at least for myself, during Prabhupada's presence, this thought predominated my consciousness. We lived with the faith that dharmasya tattvam nihita guhaya, the truth of religion resides in the heart of the vaisnava, and we were quite careful to not assert anything that we might later regret having said when we found out Prabhupada disagreed with us. At least I was cautious because i saw devotees get shot down by Prabhupada for their "brilliant sastric insights." I don't say this to undermine what you said, but at the same time to bring this important consideration to the table.

In a message dated 1/13/2019 5:33:34 PM  
India Standard Time,  
[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com) writes:

Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada

Please find session one below. I have  
tried my best to be clear. Faults are  
mine; any credits are of my Guru  
Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada, and  
Parampara.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

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**Mahatma Das**

Mon, Jan 14, 2019 at 3:19  
PM

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com

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Regarding Suniti not giving initiation, my point was not that everyone who has diksa can give it, but that if you don't have it, you definitely can't give it and if in those days women did not get it, then saying as a woman she couldn't initiate would mean as a woman she is not initiated, so how can she give it.

Prabhupada has told us that in those times, women did not take initiation, and their husbands acted as their gurus. So my reasoning was based on this. I cannot offer historical evidence that she was or was not initiated, only evidence that states in those times only men got initiated. Of course, if Suniti were initiated, then my argument is invalid.

My understanding that only men in those Vedic times received diksa is based on the following statements (and other similar statements), and that women receiving initiation happened in another later era.

If one is sincerely eager to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra or dīkṣā-mantra, one is qualified to be initiated according to the pāñcarātrika process. However, according to Vedic principles, only a brāhmaṇa who is fully engaged in his occupational duties can be initiated. Śūdras and women are not admitted to a vaidika initiation. Madhya 24.331

They have got three stages of life. First stage under the father, second stage under the husband. Therefore initiation, to the woman, there is no need of, I mean to say, sacred thread, because she's considered to be the half body of her husband. She's half-shareholder in everything of the husband; therefore there was no necessity. May 21, 1968 initiation lecture



Woman, they are generally equipped with the qualities of passion and ignorance. And man also may be, but man can be elevated to the platform of goodness. Woman cannot be. Woman cannot be. Therefore if the husband is nice and the woman follows—woman becomes faithful and chaste to the husband—then their both life becomes successful. There are three qualities of nature: sattva, raja, tama. So rajas-tama, generally, that is the quality of woman. And man can become to the platform of goodness. Therefore initiation, brahminical symbolic representation, is given to the man, not to the woman. This is the theory. Lecture Sept 22, 1972

In a message dated 1/6/2019 2:12:30 PM India Standard Time, [damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com) writes:

Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Please see my reply to Mahatma Prabhu's inquiries below. Please forgive me for long reply, but trying to make the points very clear minimizing the words did not work for me. Apologies for any inconvenience or offenses.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

You asked my understanding of the Suniti verse, which you said clearly indicates woman cannot initiate. If the verse on Suniti was meant to substantiate that woman cannot initiate, I am confused why you previously said you are not against woman initiating (I also heard your guru maharaj say this). Perhaps you wish to explain this to us.

#### **Damodara Das Reply**

Thankyou for pointing this out. Yes. I didn't mean all women cannot initiate, but that non-siddha women cannot initiate. This is normal mode of speech many times used in sastras and is called *āmra-vana-nyāya* or the logic of the mango forest. When I say that "this is a mango forest," I do not mean that there are no other trees in it but that vast majority of trees are mango trees. Thus when an injunction is given that "woman cannot initiate" it means that vast majority of women cannot initiate. This vast majority are the non-siddha women. That's the established rule.

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

If you mean that a woman who is a liberated soul can initiate, wouldn't Prabhupada have said Suniti couldn't initiate because she was not liberated. If this verse is taken to mean, however, that woman cannot initiate, this would have been the right place for Prabhupada to make that conclusion clear if he indeed did not intend to have woman as diksa gurus in Iskcon (ever or until they are liberated).

#### **Damodara Das Reply**

According to Bhagavad-gītā 3.17-25, Lord Krishna bring this point up that a liberated person is not bound by any rules of varnasrama. Then He answers this by saying that still he should follow the injunctions of varnasrama dharma, not for himself but for leading the society which otherwise would try immaturely imitate him and thus fall down. Thus, although the person himself will not fall down due to not follow his duty but he will become the reason for falldown of the whole society.

Lord Krishna stressed it is this reason for which He Himself follows all duties when He comes here although there is no doubt of His being non-siddha.

Following this example, all great devotees of the Lord who are fully liberated, followed their varnasrama rules, be they women or men. Thus we see that even the great liberated ladies like Mother Yashoda, Devaki, Kunti, Draupadi, Rohini, Rukmini Radharani, Lalita and Devahuti they all didn't become diksa-guru. Exactly this is said by Lord Krishna (Bg 3.20)—

“Kings such as Janaka attained perfection solely by performance of prescribed duties. Therefore, just for the sake of educating the people in general, you should perform your work.”

**Kings like Janaka were all self-realized souls;** consequently they had no obligation to perform the prescribed duties in the Vedas. **Nonetheless they performed all prescribed activities just to set examples for the people in general.** Janaka was the father of Sītā and father-in-law of Lord Śrī Rāma. Being a great devotee of the Lord, he was transcendently situated, but because he was the king of Mithilā (a subdivision of Bihar province in India), he had to teach his subjects how to perform prescribed duties.

Thus, even if we take that siddha-women can initiate, clubbing it with the instructions of Lord Krishna, Srila Prabhupada (in section of Bg quoted above) and actions of great devotees of past, it comes to the conclusion that —

“Non-siddha women cannot initiate. For siddha-women also it is recommended by guru-sadhu-sastras to not become diksa-guru.”

Thus, it is a “very special case,” special circumstance that may dictate for a woman to be appointed to the position of a diksa-guru. Thus we see only a few in our line like Jāhnavā mātā “but she” also “did not declare.”

So, Srila Prabhupada is making a point of rule SB 4.12.32, purport that women cannot initiate. As exceptions are not legislated, Srila Prabhupada need not mention the exceptions in the purport itself. You do not always go on mentioning the exceptions when you mention the rule, lest the exception get same emphasis as the rule.

Also following of the *āmra-vana-nyāya* in this case is natural.

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

My understanding is that Suniti could not initiate because in the culture of that era women did not receive diksa, neither did sudras and vaisyas, what to speak of mlecchas. Thus if we are to be judged by those standards, none of us could receive initiation, what to speak of give it. And how can we believe Prabhupada meant all women cannot initiate, being disqualified because of being women, knowing well that there were females in our lineage who initiated. Therefore, I suggest that this verse provides no more evidence for woman not initiating than the word "henceforward" provides evidence for ritvik vada. In other words, I suggest that this verse does not provide the unequivocal evidence you suggest it does, but only tells us that woman in that culture could not receive diksa and consequently not give diksa but that within out times and lineage this is not the case.

**Damodara Das Reply**

The culture of Suniti's era was Vedic Culture. And Vedic Culture was depend on Vedic scriptures—śruti, smṛti, purāṇa, pañcarātra, etc. **Thus, I think you are accepting that Srila Prabhupada says that according to Vedic literatures (śāstra) and Paramparā (sādhū) women "could not become diksa-gurus."**

Now the reason you have thought of (which is not directly spoken by Prabhupada in the purport) is that because they did not receive diksa they could not give diksa. You support it with the point that even sudras did not get diksa and thus they were also not allowed to give diksa. But within our lineage women can receive diksa and thus give diksa.

Great. This looks logical. But does this mean that one who receives diksa can give diksa?

No. In vedic times also brahmanas, ksatriyas, and vaisyas received diksa (seems you have got some misinformation that vaisyas did not get diksa). But it was only the prerogative of brahmanas to give diksa and become guru. Others were banned to become guru. But there were exceptions to this rule; if brahmana guru was not available then ksatriyas or vaisyas could become guru.

Thus it is established that receiving diksa doesn't make one eligible to give it also.

**Now, why in our lineage women can receive diksa?** It is because we follow pancaratrīki vidhi where women are also allowed to take diksa. So let us see if pancaratras allow women to give diksa also?

Exactly this interpretation led us to have thorough research on pancaratras which consequently became the subject matter of our paper on Narada-pancaratra which all of you have seen. We are thankful to the SAC who explained out the SB 4.12.32 in their 2013 paper in a way similar to this explanation by Mahatma Prabhu, thus leading us to expand our understanding in the matter of diksas in ISKCON and we have found extremely valuable information proving Srila Prabhupada's genius of exactly following sastras and his thorough genuinity. In the paper we have established with all evidences that —

Women, as a rule can receive diksa (1.14-15) but cannot give diksa (1.42-43). Rules are first established and then exceptions are dealt with in the 44<sup>th</sup> verse (1.44) which says that for liberated souls varna, etc (etc involves linga or gender and thus women also as per rules of mimamsa) need not be considered.

[Note: we are going to show in separate email where in 1.44 siddha is separated from sadhaka and where in Narada pancaratra women are separated from sudra]

**Thus Srila Prabhupada's words in SB 4.12.32, purport, stand still even in the pancaratrīki vidhi we follow today in ISKCON.**

Regarding females initiating in our lineage, I already explained in the reply above to this.

Because we follow pancaratrīki vidhi we can receive diksa even if sudras or anyone. It is not against sastras.

[Also, a side point but important: As it is a mistake to say that one born in a brahmana family is a brahmana; it is also a mistake to say that one born in mlecccha family is also a mlecccha. One must be seen according to symptoms, that's the rule. In cases when samskaras are in place does the rule of lineages

defining one's varna apply. ]

[Another side point is that Dhruva-maharaja received pancaratrici diksa and not vaidiki diksa. This is because of his age; 5 years; savitri (upanayana) opens at the age of 7 years. He got the mantra "om namo bhagavate vasudevaya" which is a pancaratrica dvadasaksa mantra as explained by Hari-bhakti-vilasa 1.1.25-28. It quotes Dhruva's example. Please see the attached document to see the pramanas]

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

And if this is his intention, I find it confusing that he asked his daughters to become initiating gurus and never anywhere mentioned that his female disciples could not take up this service, only his male disciples, or only females when they 100 percent transcended their conditioned nature? To me, it sounds like you are making Prabhupada mean and say something he didn't mean or say.

#### **Damodara Das Reply**

This is a good question and forces us to delve deep into our understandings of Srila Prabhupada and sastras. That is where we need to follow *guru-sadhu-sastra vakya tinete koriya aikya*; synchronization is required for in depth understanding. Thankyou for asking this.

However, I choose to reply this matter separately in an email thread as it is also to be replied to the query of Kalakanta Prabhu and also because this reply has become quite long for the readers to keep attention.

Mahatma Prabhu (6-1-2019, 11:51 am)

As a matter of interest, in the verse the words , "being a woman" were edited by Hayagriva Prabhu from Prabhupada's original "as a woman." My understanding is, as I said, as a woman did not receive diksa in those times, she could not give diksa. So Suniti, as a woman, could not give diksa. Suniti, if she lived today, could take diksa and thus her being a woman would not be a disqualification in giving diksa if she were qualified. So as a woman in that culture could not give diksa, she could not give diksa. This verse is not meant to disqualify women giving diksa today.

#### **Damodara Das Reply**

Yes, I read this argument in Kaunteya Prabhu's book. I think you have mistaken here a little bit – Prabhupada's original doesn't say "as a woman" but it says "and also a woman." The original transcript is as follows (SB 4.12.32, purport)—

“According to sastric injunctions, there is no difference between siksa guru and diksa guru, and generally the siksa guru becomes later on diksa guru. Suniti, however, being in family relationship with Dhruva, his mother, **and also woman**, could not become the diksa guru of Dhruva Maharaja”

Thus if you see it means—

Being his mother in family relationship with Dhruva

And

Also being woman

Suniti could not become the diksa-guru of Dhruva Maharaja.

Thus both reasons are there for Suniti's not being able to become diksa-guru.  
Rest of the question already answered before

[END Of Reply]

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Mon, Jan 14, 2019 at 3:56  
PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com

Cc: sati.bts@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com,

nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,

pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com,

brss108@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com,

ajitacozzi@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,

bbks108@gmail.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com,

BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com,

dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,

divyajps@yahoo.com,

Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,

Kratudas108@yahoo.com,

mpd.vda@gmail.com,

Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,



mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com,  
krishnakirti@gmail.com

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In a message dated 1/8/2019 4:49:52 PM  
India Standard Time,  
[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com) writes:

**So do your grace agree that  
According to Srila Prabhupada, sastras  
and Vedic tradition do not allow women  
to become diksa-guru? Seeing Quote  
from SB 4.12.32, purport**

Well if Bharadwaj Muni, or any great  
sadhu whose words are now vedic  
knowledge were alive today and were  
telling Prabhupada that women cannot  
initiate and Prabhupada said to them,  
"no, I want all my disciples, male and  
female, to initiate by 1975." who do you  
think I would side with?

Ok, that's a funny way of saying you haven't convinced me. Vedic tradition didn't allow other things Prabhupada did. Sastra says women don't do things that Prabhupada engaged women in doing, so should they not do those things until liberated.- or never do them? Plus, Prabhupada was broad with his definitions of perfection, pure, transcendental, etc., so why not argue that he did see some of his woman would be qualified (perfect, liberated, etc.) by his definitions rather than infer that Prabhupada's definition of siddha are so narrow and rare that basically they would exclude practically every advanced female disciple from ever initiating, and yet at the same time he is asking them to initiate? It doesn't add up in my book.

And ultimately the best way to prove who is right it to let one our advanced ladies take a few disciples. If indeed she is not a siddha by your definition,, it will be seen. that she falls apart and just can't handle being a guru. Then no further debate will be will be required. Only women beyond the modes will be

allowed to initiate (and I'll be working on my mode meter to insure we get accurate assessments ) And if she does make it as a guru before the "siddha" stage, then we can adjust our definitions of siddha to be inclusive of those female Prabhupada disciples who are "as good as their brothers" because they are good sadhakas, good preachers, good devotees, and love Prabhupada dearly. In my book, their love and dedication to following Prabhupada strictly, and their deep study of his books and expert preaching, is their siddha. Having been with Prabhupada, it doesn't resonate with me that he would hold any devotee to the high standards you define as "siddha" in order to engage them in a high service, even as high as taking disciples, especially considering .

I think we all agree that there will not be many females who want to do this service or will be qualified for this service and there are differences between male and female. From my own experience with Prabhupada, I suggest that you have taken your siddha/liberated, pure, etc in a way that

Prabhupada did intend it to be used.

Of course I understand your point, but I don't think we can divorce Prabhupada's desires so easily. Maybe I sound like an atheist, or a fool, but Prabhupada would not have said "daughters" if he didn't think there would be some of his female disciples who could initiate without clicking, who were liberated/transcendental/pure devotees/siddhas (by his broader definition of those terms).

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Mon, Jan 14, 2019 at 4:10 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com

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Prabhu,

Just a personal note that I appreciate the discussion and your scholarship and totally understand your point of view, even though it may not always sound like I do and it may even sound to you that my replies indicate I don't understand. I do. It is just I also see things from other perspectives, which of course is natural, and a perfect synthesis of both viewpoints in which all are satisfied may be something that doesn't happen, yet something we all have to learn to live with and still appreciate and respect one another.

Hare Krsna,

Mahatma das

In a message dated 1/13/2019 3:02:39 PM  
India Standard Time,  
[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com) writes:

Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

Respected Chandrasekhara Maharaja,

>> the overall subject of Hermeneutics is a MOST important topic for us to discuss in ISKCON.

Exactly. I am very grateful to Chandrasekhara Maharaja to bring the us to the real point of discussion. This is what must be done. VDG is just one of many controversial issues and if ISKCON is able to sort out its Hermeneutics side, I am able to see how we all will be able to appreciate Srila Prabhupada as the true messenger of the sastras and parampara.

We have already worked to some extent on this. Now we would like to take a couple of days (or one more) to properly arrange it and present in a way that the members here are able to easily understand it and help them apply it in different cases (case studies). I will be preparing (not so) short emails to share this in a few doses. Hope devotees here

will be benefited.

I request that we approach the Hermeneutics, etc. discussion leaving our pro- or anti- FDG understandings on side, in order to give a neutral ear to it. I also propose if I can start this discussion in a new thread which will be solely for that discussion.

**Discussion of Hermeneutics will involve:**

1. Need to Harmonize Guru-sadhu-sastra and how the correct approach saves us from undermining SP
2. The science of Evidence: Includes different levels of evidences, their relative authoritativeness, cases of contradiction, types of statements, etc.
3. The science of Harmonization: Case studies based on point #2 with rules explained on the go
4. Principle, detail, Time, Place, Circumstance, and the science of adjustment
5. How SP practically applied point #4

Thankyou,  
Your servant,



**damodara das**

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**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 14,  
2019 at 4:49  
PM

To: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Krishna  
Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>,  
pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,  
Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi

dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa

Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana

Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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from Vishakha dd who wrote on Googlegroups (which no one used):

Here are my thoughts on the subject:

As we know, there were times when Srila Prabhupada directly said that Vaisnavis can accept disciples, and times when he indirectly said the same: "Maybe by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations" (Letter, January 3, 1969); "A Vaiṣṇava, a bona fide representative of the Supreme

Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, can become a guru even if he is *śva-paca*, a member of a family of dog-eaters” (SB. 5.17.11); “If one is engaged in brahminical service or occupational duties, he must be considered a *brāhmaṇa* despite the family in which he is born. That is the verdict of all the *śāstras*” (Cc Antya 16.29).

Let’s look closely at one direct statement. When directly asked if women could initiate disciples (June 18, 1976), Srila Prabhupada begins by saying “Yes.” He does not leave it at that, however, but supports his answer with historical precedence and by citing sastra:

1. There is historical precedence for Vaisnavis accepting disciples: Jahnava Devi.
2. There is scriptural evidence for Vaisnavis accepting disciples: Bhagavad-gita (9.32), where Krishna says that women can go to the highest perfection of life. If women can go to the highest perfection of life, why can’t they become guru?

He adds that not so many women *do* accept the position of guru. Srila Prabhupada then offers further scriptural evidence: “Whether man or woman, one who knows the science of Krishna can become guru.” (Cc., Madhya 8.128)

Please note that nowhere does Srila Prabhupada say that men and women have different criteria for accepting disciples. Neither does he say that women need different qualifications than men in order to take up the service. Rather, he says that both men and women are required to know the science of Krishna.

Finally, Srila Prabhupada offers a practical example – one suited to the professor’s understanding: “In our material world, is it any prohibition that woman cannot become professor? If she is qualified, she can become professor. What is the wrong there? She must be qualified. That is the position. So similarly, if the woman understands Krishna consciousness perfectly, she can become guru.”

Those who oppose Vaisnavis initiating disciples support their position only with indirect statements from the scriptures and Srila Prabhupada. Since there is also indirect support for Vaisnavis initiating disciples, this form of argument is inconclusive.

For the SABHA or any follower of Srila Prabhupada to say unequivocally that Vaisnavis cannot accept disciples and thus contradict Srila Prabhupada’s direct statements – statements he supports with

historical, scriptural, and practical evidence  
– is inappropriate and, to me, unacceptable.  
your servant,  
Visakha Das

On Sat, Jan 12, 2019 at 6:07 AM Damodara  
Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)> wrote:

Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

See below my reply (in red) to  
Chandrasedkhara Maharaja's email.

I have tried to keep the reply small and thus  
not addressed all points. More to come.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

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**Damodara Dasa**  
<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>

Mon, Jan 14,  
2019 at 5:51  
PM

To: Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>

Cc: Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Krishna  
Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>,  
Pancaratra Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Carl  
Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>,  
"Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA"  
<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi  
<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
"Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana  
Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa  
Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya  
Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma  
(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura  
Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman



(das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira  
dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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**Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada.**

**Respected Mahatma Prabhu,**

**Please find my reply below in red:**

**Your servant,  
damodara das**

So in understanding siddhanta, or proper action or behavior , or acceptable preaching methods we also must consider the heart/desire/mood of Prabhupada, and this is not always going to be the same as his or sastras general instructions on a matter. In other words, in some situations, a disciple may not follow a general instruction because he knows the heart of the guru, i.e. what the guru really wants in that situation. Prabhupada said the first class disciple is one who knows what the guru wants even without the guru asking. My concern is that we don't end up being "over intelligent." Being over intelligent was not an uncommon affair for Prabhupada's disciples during his manifest lila. We have even seen devotees quoting Prabhupada's purports to and other sastra to Prabhupada to disobey a desire of Prabhupada's.

**How do I understand that I have understood  
" what the guru really wants in that situation? "**

In this issue I am clearly seeing that different disciples of Srila Prabhupada are having distinctly different opinions about what Srila Prabhupada "really wants."

If it wouldn't have been the case then VDGs would have been passed in 1998 itself. Why so long discussion for last 20 years.

Thus, it is not an issue of whether to go against what Srila Prabhupada really wants. The real issue is to first understand "what Srila Prabhupada really wants."

More clearly and to the ground...

The issue is **how to understand "what Srila Prabhupada really wants."**

Thus comes the question of discussing guru-sadhu-sastra procedure to understand things.

Let's look at a hypothetical situation that you didn't bring up in your analysis (which btw, I appreciate). I will explain my concerns, and of course, you can address them if you like.

Let's start with a hypothetical situation. You are a woman and Prabhupada personally asks you to initiate. Would you try to reason with Prabhupada that this is not proper, on the basis of sadhu and sastra, or would you just follow his order? In fact, such things like this (of course, maybe not as dramatic as this) did happen in Prabhupada's presence, and no disciple would question the direct order of Prabhupada, even if they felt it was against sadhu and sastra.

Following direct order of Srila Prabhupada, even if it may appear against sastra and sahu

is not at all against Vedic hermeneutics.

In session nos.2 or 3, these cases are going to be discussed; may be we can wait till then.

**Highlights of the answer (evidences will be included in the session):**

\* Those who are liberated (dharma personified) may act in some ways which are against normal dharma as mentioned by guru-sadhu-sastra

\* That should not be taken as a dharma for everyone to follow.

\* Exceptions are never to be made general or are not even for drawing out a rule from them.

\* The harmonization is that due to some reasons he had to act like that but he doesn't subscribe to that understanding or intention

\* Because if taken that he subscribes to that understanding which is against sadhu and sastra then he ceases to be a representative of them

\* For instance, Prabhupada allowed, encouraged and established Brahmachari ashrams which are against sadhu-sastra.

\* But he didn't subscribe to that understanding and wanted to revert back to

not having them as soon as situations permit  
\* In Vedic Hermeneutics an example given is that of Yudhisthira Maharaja. He had to speak lie to his own guru.

\* Did normal people take speaking lie to guru as dharma?

\* No. They understood that there must be some situation due to which he had to speak lie and thus didn't imitate that

\* Thus, if Srila Prabhupada is giving me direct order for myself, I will take it like that—for this time and for this person—not for all times and all persons

\* If I take it that SP meant it for all times and all persons, then because this is not as per sadhu-sastra, then I am, knowingly or unknowingly, saying that Srila Prabhupada can make new codes of dharma. But dharmam tu saksad bhagavat-pranitam—Codes of dharma are decided by Lord only and they are eternal.

\* For instance, Srila Prabhupada asked one of his servant disciple that if he (the disciple) doesn't chant his rounds it's okay. His serving Prabhupada is his chanting rounds. Now if I take this instruction for all times and all persons then I have mistaken.

\* You can also see the case of Parasurama whose father asked him to kill his mother.

Now Parasurama followed the order.

\* What if someone takes it as a rule and doesn't consider killing mother a sin?

\* If his father would have asked to establish killing of mother as not sinful obviously Parasurama would have objected. Sometimes gurus used to test his disciples by instructing them adharma.

My question—

If Srila Prabhupada asks me to stop chanting and stop following 4-regulative principles what should I do?

Besides this, if he asks me to apply this rule for all ISKCON devotees for all times of future what should be done?

[Of course we know this will never happen, still for making the flaw of argument clear I am brining these extremes]

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**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 14,  
2019 at 8:53  
PM

Cc: Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Krishna  
Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>,  
pancaratnadas  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti  
Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,  
Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi  
dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa  
Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana  
Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa  
Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya  
Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma  
(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura  
Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman



(das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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When I copied and pasted from google groups, the "i" at the end of Visakha dasi was inadvertently, ironically, omitted. My bad.

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Tue, Jan 15, 2019  
at 3:43 AM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,

Pancaratra Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Carl

Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David

Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati

devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Mahatma Prabhu and others on this conference, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

## You wrote:

Let's say a female Prabhupada disciple has been actively traveling and preaching since she retired from family life 10 years ago. As a result she has a few dozen siksa disciples who are not initiated and have taken shelter of her and want to take diksa from her. They are waiting to see if the GBC will approve her at some point in the future. They have the same relationship with her as other aspiring disciples have with their male diksa gurus. She has been guiding and sheltering her siksa disciples in a similar way as a diksa guru guides and shelters his disciples as well as his aspiring disciples. As such, her disciples are doing well in their Krishna consciousness. She is also doing well and is very inspired to do in this service.

Thank you for your question regarding clarification of our position.

The general rule is that according to *dharma*, to function in any particular capacity, one must follow the particular *vidhi*, or rules and regulations, that is prescribed for one to follow. Lord Kṛṣṇa in Bhagavad-gītā 18.46 gives us two terms, one is called *svadharma*, and the other is called *paradharma*. *Paradharma* is also listed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.15.12 - 13) as one of five types of *adharma*, which must be given up.

*Svadharma* are duties prescribed for one according to one's nature (*svabhava*), and *paradharma* are duties prescribed for someone else but *not* one's self. For example,

non-violence is a principle to be followed by *brāhmaṇas* but not *kṣatriyas*. For a *kṣatriya* to follow non-violence or *brāhmaṇa's dharma* is therefore *paradharmā*. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa throughout the *Gītā* was constantly goading Arjuna to give up his unwillingness to fight. Non-violence is a principle for some to follow, but not for Arjuna, because it is against his nature, and for him to do so would be sinful on his part. Fighting, on the other hand, would incur no sin because, as per the Lord in BG 18.47, duties prescribed according to one's own nature do not incur sin. Thus the Lord says it is better to do one's own duties imperfectly than another's perfectly.

This same principle of *svadharmā* vs. *paradharmā* applies also to functioning as an *ācārya*, or initiating spiritual master. It may be asked that if the role of a spiritual master is completely transcendental, or above considerations of material qualification like birth, gender, etc., then why must we observe the rules of dharma prescribed for ordinary people? The answer is that in general, we ourselves in our present state of consciousness are *not* transcendental to the modes of material nature. Therefore,

in order to function in *that capacity* while still under the influence of the modes of nature, we have to act according the *vidhis*, or rules, that are prescribed *according to our nature for that particular role*. You can think of it as something like a drivers license given to teenagers. They can drive a car, but that license may come with certain limitations (they can't drive after certain hours, can't purchase certain items with their license, etc.).

Hence, being able to act as *ācārya* even though still functioning under the modes of material nature is in fact a concession for people at a lower level to take up a particular service that is best taken up by people who are factually liberated from the modes of nature. Śrīla Prabhupāda discusses this in an early letter. "A person who is liberated acharya and guru cannot commit any mistake, but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as guru and acharya by strictly following the disciplic succession." (Letter to Janardana, 26 Apr 1968)

So, when we come to your (Mahatma Prabhu's) hypothetical example above, which

is not actually hypothetical (I personally know of some examples), we have to ask the question: under what *vidhi*, or set of rules, would she be permitted to be an *ācārya* (*dīkṣā-guru*)?

In answer to this, in our disciplic succession, we follow two *vidhis* side-by-side. One is *bhāgavata-vidhi*, which is the nine process of devotional service (*śravaṇam, kīrtaṇam, viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam, etc.*), and then there is *pāñcarātrika-vidhi*, both *vidhis* have their particular rules by which one may be allowed to act as an initiating spiritual master. So, the first question to ask is, "what is her qualification" to act in terms of which *vidhi*?

The answer turns out to be pretty simple: if you are a highly elevated *mahābhāgavata* who is no longer bound by *māyā*, then you can initiate someone in whatever way the Lord in your heart directs you. For example, Gaura-kīśora Dāsa Bābājī initiated Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura but not according to *pāñcarātrika* rules and regulations. In fact, some of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's detractors accused him of not being properly initiated. But the *dīkṣā* was *bhāgavatī*, not *pāñcarātrikī*.



But for everyone else, who are still practicing *bhakti* while still under the influence of *māyā*, they are required to follow the *pāñcarātrika* system. So, we have to look at the rules and regulations of *that* system to understand who is allowed to act as *ācārya*. So, in this regard, *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* is a *granth* of *Nārada Pañcarātra* that our *ācāryas* have cited as an authoritative text in the matter of initiations. Appendix I of our paper gives all the references that demonstrates its authority in our *sampradāya*.

Now, the rules this *śāstra* gives for qualification for an *ācārya* (*dīkṣā-guru*) explicitly mentions women as being excluded (*nā jātu mantra dā nārī - 1.42*) unless they are at the level of *pratyakṣitātma-nātha*, literally seeing God by direct perception (a condition that happens in *sādhya-bhakti*, beginning at the stage of *bhāva*, never in *sādhana-bhakti*) (1.44). So, to the disappointment of many, this does seem to generally exclude women. But it is not an absolute prohibition; it allows women to function as *ācārya*, just "not so many." And it comports with Śrīla Prabhupāda's

statements that female *ācāryas* were "in very special case," etc.

The thesis of our paper is that the verses we translated for our paper reconcile *all* of Śrīla Prabhupāda's differing statements about the eligibility of women to become initiating spiritual masters. At various times, Śrīla Prabhupāda said different, seemingly incompatible things about this: On the one hand, he said women if they pass the Bhaktivedanta Exam, then they could be allowed to accept disciples. But on the other hand, he said that women could not accept disciples is in the purport to SB 4.12.32, where he says that Sunīti on account of being Dhruva's mother, and a woman, could not be his initiating spiritual master. And then there are the restrictions ("not so many", "in very special case"). The specific standard of the verses made available in our paper is that *they resolve all these contradictory statements without the need for interpretation.*

What we mean by "without the need for interpretation" is technical, that once the *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* verses are taken into account, the *mukhya-vṛtti*, or direct

meaning of the verses is retained. We do not have to resort to some interpretation, or *lakṣana-vṛtti*, in order to reconcile the otherwise conflicting statements. Just like the well-known example of Śrīla Prabhupāda seeing his Guru Mahārāja order a snake to be killed and observing that this seemed incompatible with *śāstric* injunctions to be non-violent. But when he read in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.14) that "Since even saintly persons take pleasure in the killing of a scorpion or a snake, all the worlds have achieved great satisfaction because of the death of this demon." So, the action of his guru and the injunction to be non-violent were reconciled by this verse. And Śrīla Prabhupāda was so happy upon reading this. No interpretation needed for the non-violent injunctions or his Guru Maharaja's actions. So, this was the standard of the of the evidence brought forth in our paper to reconcile all of the disparate statements Śrīla Prabhupāda made at one time or another about the eligibility of women to become *ācārya*.

Now, I can understand why even this result may not seem satisfactory to some. So, what follows is a kind of topical list that addresses

what I have so far seen to be additional objections.

First, and most important, is Śrīla Prabhupāda's 3 Jan 1969 letter to Hansadutta, in which Śrīla Prabhupāda says that maybe by 1975 his sons and daughters after taking the Bhaktivedanta Exam would be approved to accept their own disciples. The conventional understanding of that is that his disciples, male or female, can sit for the exam and (assuming they have been following the process strictly) can start initiating. In other words, women would not be "very special case" or "not so many" but quite frequent. Maybe 25%, 30%, or even 50% like physicians male/female ratio today. So, the plain intent from this letter is that female spiritual masters would not be infrequent.

And I agree with that. But (and you knew a "but" was coming), no one was initiating by 1975. In fact, in the four months before passing away in 1977, when he deputed some disciples to initiate on his behalf, those were still his disciples, not those of his representatives. The fact is he never appointed anyone during his lifetime to

accept their own disciples. And it's not that he was against doing that.

For example, he said,

"Yes. I shall choose some guru. I shall say, 'Now you become ācārya. You become authorized.' I am waiting for that. You become all ācārya. I retire completely. But the training must be complete." (Room conversation, 22 Apr. 1977, Bombay.)

So, why did this not happen?

What I think happened is that in the beginning of the movement Śrīla Prabhupāda had some higher expectations for how quickly his disciples would make spiritual advancement than he did toward the end of his time with us. And then he adjusted accordingly. And those initial expectations were not unreasonable. For example, in *Jaiva Dharma*, there is a narration of a *bhakta* who gets initiated and in less than a year he reaches the stage of *bhāva*. So, that expectation on Śrīla Prabhupāda's part was reasonable. It also explains why Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed to give more emphasis

to *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma* in his latter years in ISKCON than in his former years. At least, this is how I reconcile the two conflicting facts - one is by 1975 some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples would be initiating, and the other is that even up to the time of his departure no one was initiating. A better explanation would at least have to reconcile these two facts.

Second, another fact is that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself gave very little guidance on how his disciples should conduct initiations after his departure. In the May 28, 1977 tape, Satsvarūpa Mahārāja, who represented the GBC, approached Śrīla Prabhupāda to understand how initiations were to be conducted at that time. While it has been the focus of some very creative interpretations, the conversation was short, not conclusive, and not always clear. And if initiations were understood adequately at the time, there would have been no need to have asked him. So, what does this mean?

It means that other sources have to be consulted. To learn how to conduct initiations properly, best that one go to an authority in the matter. And that authority



not only includes another bona fide spiritual master but also includes *śāstra*, and previous *ācāryas*. Hence, going to the *śāstras* and works of previous *ācāryas* is the right thing to do. And that's what we have attempted to do in the paper we wrote. We went to the *śāstras* and *ācāryas* to show how *śāstra* says initiations should be conducted. In this case, the question is over eligibility. This is as per Śrīla Prabhupāda's instruction in CC 20.352 purport, where "*śāstra* is the center of all." These sources are authorities for us, they should not be considered to be unauthoritative simply because Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't quote them much, if at all.

A final point to mention here is that whenever Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke about the qualification of a guru, it was typically about the *uttama-adhikārī* liberated *ācārya*, As compared with the liberated guru, he spoke very infrequently about the less-qualified *madhyama-* or *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* gurus. This also resulted in a lot of confusion just after Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure. In those days, many who became guru also thought they became liberated from the material energy, too. Some lived lavishly, flaunted

rules of dharma meant for ordinary people, etc. Because they were the guru, they were liberated--until they were not. So, there was this vast, in-between stage of gurus who were not yet liberated but could still act as guru by strictly following the disciplic succession, but seems to have been much less of a topic in Śrīla Prabhupāda's own teachings. How were these less-than-liberated gurus supposed to conduct themselves, and what was their actual qualification?

These questions illustrate that the debate over female *dīkṣā-gurus* is really just a special case of a more general debate that should be had about non-liberated gurus. What about vaiśyas and kṣatriyas? Should everyone who qualifies as *dvija* in ISKCON be initiated as a *brāhmaṇa*? Would it not be better if one truly were *vaiśya* by nature to be initiated as a *vaiśya* instead of as a *brāhmaṇa*? Would that not result in less social disturbance if everyone could be better situated? What rules pertain to them? (Dāmodara Prabhu has actually been studying this for the sake of understanding how to implement this in a *daiva-varṇāśrama* society.)

So, then the material *svabhava*, or nature, of people needs to be considered for such non-liberated candidates. Now, the fact is that *Nārada Pañcarātra* plainly prohibits women in the non-liberated state from becoming spiritual master. *Nārada Pañcarātra* also makes it clear that it is discussing devotees (see *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā*, 1.15 and 1.43), not non-devotees. Now, it's not necessary to understand why the prohibition is there to follow it. But just as Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes supported *śāstric* injunctions with examples from experience, I can also attempt to offer such an explanation, with the caveat that experience and logic inevitably are inferior to *śabda pramāṇa*.

The example I give is the #MeToo movement. Literally hundreds of high-status men in the top-most positions of society in a short time were discovered to have mistreated women, or stood accused of it. A Vedic society does not have #MeToo movements because men and women are by social rank and occupation are kept far apart. The way *varṇāśrama* does it is by keeping men and women separate, with women always to be under the control of a father, husband,

or grown son.

The social good this achieves is a lessening of sexual attraction, and that is *varṇāśrama's* primary goal. Occupational pursuit takes a back seat to this. Some will say that it's not fair that an otherwise qualified woman should be denied an opportunity to accept disciples, but what they seem to forget is the fact that not only is she a woman, she is also a woman who has not fully transcended the influence of the material energy. Moreover, the vast majority of her disciples will not be liberated, either.

Some say that this problem is no different for men. But is it really? For example, in the 2005 paper the Śāstric Advisory Council published on female *dīkṣā-gurus*, the council recommended that women who are acting as *dīkṣā-guru* have what they call "relative prerequisites." They say that a female *dīkṣā-guru* should have a house, be maintained by relatives or senior GBC members or other female relatives. Do male *dīkṣā-gurus* need these to be supplied to them in order to function as guru, really?

But if you have to have material

arrangements for your own well-being, then why not just accept what the scriptures give instead of speculate? If the scriptures say that at a certain stage of consciousness or a particular body, one must not take up some role, like *dīkṣā-guru*, then the injunction should be followed. It is not necessary to become guru to go back to Godhead. And the injunction should be followed because it is God's order. Dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam, only God can make dharma, no one else.

So, this is an important point: if appearances were identical with the truth, then there would be no need of *śāstra*.

To bring this back around to Mahatma Prabhu's question, which seems to be more a challenge. Here is his question again:

Let's say a female Prabhupada disciple has been actively traveling and preaching since she retired from family life 10 years ago. As a result she has a few dozen siksa disciples who are not initiated and have taken shelter of her and want to take diksa from her. They are waiting to see if the GBC will approve her at some point in the future. They have the same relationship with her as other aspiring disciples have with their male diksa gurus. She has been guiding and sheltering her siksa disciples in a similar way as a diksa guru guides and shelters his disciples as well as his aspiring disciples. As such, her disciples are doing well in their Krishna consciousness. She is also doing well and is very inspired to do in this service.

So, the counter-challenge here is if she is a)

still in *sādhana-bhakti* (and not yet at the stage of *sādhyā-bhakti*, or *bhāva*), and b) the *śāstra* says she should not try to become an initiating spiritual master (*Bhāradvāja-saṁhiā* 1.42) yet go on instructing her students (*Bhāradvāja-saṁhiā* 1.43 - she should give instructions according to her capacity but may not get post of *ācārya*), should she ignore the *śāstra* and go ahead and initiate them?

If appearances were identical with the truth, there would be no need of *śāstra*.

Respectfully

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mahatma Das** <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>

Date: Mon, Jan 14, 2019 at 1:40 PM

Subject: Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

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Tue, Jan 15, 2019

at 8:52 PM



**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Chris

Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,

Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Carl

Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David

Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati

devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana

Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti

Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Mahatma Prabhu and others, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

You wrote:

And for this example, let's say we all concur that she is at least on the stage of nistha.

As an FYI for everyone, this condition has its origin in the Śāstric Advisory Council's 2005 paper, where they make this recommendation.

##### SAC 2005 #####

8) “A woman's nature has been particularly well studied by Kaśyapa Muni. Women are self-interested by nature, and therefore they should be protected by all means so that their natural inclination to be too self-interested will not be manifested. Women need to be protected by men. A woman should be cared for by her father in her childhood, by her husband in her youth and by her grown sons in her old age. This is the injunction of Manu, who says that a woman should not be given independence at any stage. Women must be cared for so that they will not be free to manifest their natural tendency for gross selfishness. There have been many cases, even in the present day, in which women have killed their husbands to take advantage of their insurance policies. This is not a criticism of women but a practical study of their nature.”

Women on the bodily platform are selfish and should therefore be protected not only from lusty male predators but from their

own lower natures as well. This is clear. The rest of the purport below, however, makes an important distinction.

“Such natural instincts of a woman or a man are manifested only in the bodily conception of life. When either a man or a woman is advanced in spiritual consciousness, the bodily conception of life practically vanishes.” (Bhāg. 6.18.42 purport)

Here is a suggestion in relation to the above point: The bodily concept of life is transcended, along with the modes of nature, at the stage of bhāva-bhakti. But at the level of niṣṭhā the residual anarthas are only remnants that no longer obstruct one’s progress (See Madhurya-kādambinī, chapter 4). Therefore, we recommend that at least the symptoms of niṣṭhā should be seen in dīkṣā-guru candidates, whether male or female.

##### END SAC 2005 #####

Is your point that she cannot initiate her siksa disciples because she must be above the modes of nature to do this service, even if it appears she is has shown she competent to give shelter to disciples?

Our point is that one has to follow a particular *vidhi* that is prescribed according to one's nature. The section of *Madhurya-kādambinī (MK)* the SAC quotes in fact does not establish that anyone is released from their obligations that are prescribed according to their material *svabhāva*, and that is because at this stage it is clear that they still have one. Therefore at the stage of *niṣṭhā*, they are not yet released from the obligation of performing prescribed duties. As per MK (4):

The Supreme Lord is the greatest benefactor of the pure devotees, the saintly sadhus. Therefore the only way to receive the Lord's mercy is to first receive the grace of the pure devotees. The first verse quoted previously describes the unsteady bhajana-kriya stage of devotional service. The second verse (1.2.18) describes naisthiki-bhakti, or steady devotional service, also known as the niṣṭhā stage. In describing the two stages of bhakti both the verses mention destroying inauspicious things in the heart, of purifying the heart of

unwanted material desires. The second verse quoted suites that impurities are almost completely destroyed, meaning that some residue of impurity is still there in the heart.

And as we see from *Bhāradvāja-saṅhitā* 1.44, a higher platform of spiritual advancement as a prerequisite is indeed indicated.

Our point once again is that one has to act according to the *vidhi* that he, or she, is obliged to perform.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Tue, Jan 15, 2019  
at 10:52 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa

Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami



<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti  
Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,  
Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita  
Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB  
Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva  
Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,  
Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>,  
"Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles -  
USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>,  
Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>,  
Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>,  
"Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>,  
Pancaratra Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd

<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Some comments on the exchange below between Mahatma Prabhu and Damodara Prabhu.

This I think gets to the fundamental point of pretty much every other disagreement we have been having. So, this is important.

On Mon, Jan 14, 2019 at 3:56 PM Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

In a message dated 1/8/2019 4:49:52 PM India Standard Time, [damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com) writes:

**So do your grace agree that  
According to Srila Prabhupada, sastras  
and Vedic tradition do not allow  
women to become diksa-guru? Seeing  
Quote from SB 4.12.32, purport**

Well if Bharadwaj Muni, or any great sadhu whose words are now vedic knowledge were alive today and were telling Prabhupada that women cannot initiate and Prabhupada said to them, "no, I want all my disciples, male and

female, to initiate by 1975." who do you think I would side with?

So, what do you do with Srila Prabhupada's own statement about Sunīti? Do you accept it as true?

Ok, that's a funny way of saying you haven't convinced me. Vedic tradition didn't allow other things Prabhupada did. Sastra says women don't do things that Prabhupada engaged women in doing, so should they not do those things until liberated.- or never do them?

It seems that you may be taking Śrīla Prabhupāda's words as sufficient for your own understanding, that *śāstra* or the previous *ācāryas* are not required. Would that be a fair assessment?

Plus, Prabhupadāwas broad with his definitions of perfection, pure, transcendental, etc., so why not argue that he did see some of his woman would be qualified (perfect, liberated, etc.) by his definitions rather than infer

that Prabhupada's definition of siddha are so narrow and rare that basically they would exclude practically every advanced female disciple from ever initiating, and yet at the same time he is asking them to initiate? It doesn't add up in my book.

It seems as if you aren't accepting everything that Śrīla Prabhupāda says, either.

For example, how do you account for his statements that female *dīkṣā-gurus* were "not so many" or "in very special case"? We do agree that he also said that, don't we?

Also, how come no one was initiating by 1975? Why no one was initiating even up to the point of his passing? Do you think that may have to reconsider what he really meant by his "by 1975" statement in light of this fact?

And ultimately the best way to prove who is right it to let one our advanced ladies take a few disciples.

Here is the point of disagreement.

You are putting your pratyakṣa above śāstra, sādhu, and guru.

We put śāstra above sādhu and guru, and we put all three above our own pratyakṣa.

This is a big difference.

If indeed she is not a siddha by your definition,, it will be seen. that she falls apart and just can't handle being a guru. Then no further debate will be will be required. Only women beyond the modes will be allowed to initiate (and I'll be working on my mode meter to insure we get accurate assessments ) And if she does make it as a guru before the "siddha" stage, then we can adjust our definitions of siddha to be inclusive of those female Prabhupada disciples who are "as good as their brothers" because they are good sadhakas, good preachers, good devotees, and love Prabhupada dearly. In my book, their love and dedication to following Prabhupada strictly, and their deep study of his books and

expert preaching, is their siddha. Having been with Prabhupada, it doesn't resonate with me that he would hold any devotee to the high standards you define as "siddha" in order to engage them in a high service, even as high as taking disciples, especially considering .

I think we all agree that there will not be many females who want to do this service or will be qualified for this service and there are differences between male and female. From my own experience with Prabhupada,

However valuable your experience, it still has to be seen through the eyes of *śāstra* and the *ācāryas*. It still has to be subordinate to these other sources of authority. Otherwise, we have seen so many of your godbrothers and godsisters who were so certain of their realizations ended up going astray in their own spiritual lives, or falling down. Some of them with a lot of personal association with Śrīla Prabhupāda himself.

I suggest that you have taken your siddha/liberated, pure, etc in a way that



Prabhupada did intend it to be used.

Our understanding rests on Śrīla Prabhupāda's prescription in CC Madhya 20.352, wherein śāstra is the center of all, and we reconcile the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the *ācāryas* to śāstra. And we can demonstrate that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself followed the same process we follow.

Of courto ise I understand your point, but I don't think we can divorce Prabhupada's desires so easily.

We don't divorce śāstra and the ācāryas from Śrīla Prabhupāda's desires at all. But, one thing you may want to consider is that there can be a difference between what *we think* Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted, and what is his actual intent.

Maybe I sound like an atheist, or a fool, but Prabhupada would not have said "daughters" if he didn't think there would be some of his female disciples who could initiate without clicking , who were liberated/transcendental/pure devotees/siddhas (by his broader

**definition of those terms).**

We have to reconcile our understanding of what we think Śrīla Prabhupāda meant not only with whatever else he said about the matter but with śāstra as well.

Why did Śrīla Prabhupāda say that Sunīti because she was a woman could not be Ḍhruva's *dīkṣā-guru*? Can you reconcile that with his "by 1975" statement?

Respectfully,

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 16,  
2019 at 4:21  
PM

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,  
pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>,  
Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>,  
Rukmini

Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>,  
Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>,  
Walker

David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected BRS Maharaja,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

Thankyou for your question which may be useful for others also. Below is my explanation for the meaning of the word:

Bharadvaja Samhita (Narada Pancaratra)  
1.44:

*kim apy atrābhijāyante yoginaḥ sarva-yoniṣu |*

***pratyakṣitātma-nāthānām*** *naiṣāṁ cintyaṁ kulādikam ||44||*

“But, because perfect yogis (or *nitya-siddha* devotees) who are on the stage of *yoga-pratyakṣa* (i.e. are self-realized – seeing God face-to-face), *pratyakṣitātma-nāthānām*, may take birth in any family tradition, in such cases no consideration of *kula*, gender, etc. as mentioned earlier apply (they can become *ācāryas*).”

The original word in the verse is  
***pratyakṣitātmanāthānām***. It means,

***pratyakṣita ātmanaḥ nāthaḥ yaiḥ  
teṣām***

*pratyakṣita*—directly perceiving; *ātmanaḥ*—of the soul; *nāthaḥ*—Lord or master; *yaiḥ*—by whom; *teṣām*—of those

"Of those who are directly perceiving the Lord of the souls."

Seeing God face-to-face is used to generally

express such notions. It doesn't mean just seeing but all perceptions. Srila Prabhupada uses this term in Bg 15.7 purport,

The following information is there in the Mādhyandināyana-śruti: *sa vā eṣa brahma-  
niṣṭha idaṃ śarīraṃ martyaṃ atisṛjya brahmābhisampadya brahmaṇā paśyati brahmaṇā  
śṛṇoti brahmaṇaivedaṃ sarvaṃ anubhavati*. It is stated here that when a living entity gives up this material embodiment and enters into the spiritual world, he revives his spiritual body, and in his spiritual body he can **see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face**. He can hear and speak to Him face to face, and he can understand the Supreme Personality as He is.

As the Lord cannot be seen by material senses it means that the devotee, mentioned in BS 1.44, has become svarūpa-siddha i.e. he is on the bhāva-bhakti platform where one starts seeing (or perceiving) the Lord.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura says—

If one progresses through the stages of faith, practice, purification, steadiness, taste and attachment, in either vaidhi or rāgānuga-sādhana, one **then comes to the stage of bhāva**, preliminary prema. It is at this point that one attains āpana-daśā. At this stage, beyond the category of sādhana-bhakti, when scriptural rules will be discarded as troublesome to one's service, conceptions of rāgānuga and vaidhi will both be discarded.

Here, one's identification with the material body will vanish and identification with one's spiritual body will predominate. **In that spiritual body (svarūpa-siddhi) one will always see Vṛndāvana and serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa**. This final stage is called *sampatti-daśā*.

—Harināma Cintāmaṇī, 15

Hope this helps all.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,  
pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>,  
Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>,  
Rukmini

Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>,  
David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti

Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>,  
Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>,  
Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>,  
Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana

Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>,  
"BDDS (Bhakti

Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>,  
Dhruva Kusa

Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,  
Divya



Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances,

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

It was proposed in this forum that Suniti could not become diksa-guru of Dhruva Maharaja because in vedic times women were not initiated and thus, as she could not receive diksa, she could not give diksa

**Point to be noted:** Srila Prabhupada did not involve the reason that because woman could not get diksa they could not become diksa-guru

There are two possibilities for Suniti's case why she could not become diksa-guru (SB 4.12.32 purport):

- a) Only because she did not receive diksa, being woman is just an instrumental reason
- b) Only because of her feminine gender

If case 'a' is true, then those who receive diksa should be able to give diksa also. But we see in those times ksatriyas and vaisyas also did receive diksa but could not give diksa because they were not brahmanas. So there was something else that stopped them from giving diksa.

Similarly there was something else besides not receiving diksa due to which Suniti could not become guru. This something else was being a woman (the only left option). Thus, case 'b' stands correct.

If we see in pacnacatras, then we get clear description that women can receive diksa but cannot give it.

Thus, case 'b' stands clear: **Suniti could not become diksa-guru because she was a Woman. No need to imagine any other reason.**

This something else is actually an order to not engage in para-dharma, or other's duties not meant for one's position. (Bg 3.35, 18.47, SB 7.15.12-13). This is so much important that even Lord Krishna Himself doesn't transgress this although he is ever liberated and instructs even liberated souls not to transgress it (Bg 3.17-25). This is a very elaborate subject matter and may be explained in detail later— how para-dharma, even if followed by liberated souls, destroys varnasrama.

Thankyou,

Your servant,

damodara das

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 16,  
2019 at 6:11  
PM

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,  
pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>,  
Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>,  
Rukmini

Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>,  
David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana  
Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa  
Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya  
Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma  
(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura  
Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman  
(das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira  
dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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**Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.**

## **Difference between Interpretation and Derivation:**

This is just for one clarification. Usually when we start explaining one verse taking help from the facts established in other verses of same sastra or in other sastras, devotees start feeling that it is our interpretation and thus there are large chances of its being WRONG.

I would like to clarify that it is not called interpretation unless some assumption or inference is used. In other words, as long as the direct meaning (mukhya-vṛtti) of the statements or words are kept intact, it cannot be called interpretation.

### **Example of Derivation:**

For instance,

**Text A** says that "One who is born in the family of a brahmana must do sadhya-vandanam thrice a day."

**Text B** says that "it is qualities by which one is to be judged as brahmana."

**Text C** says that "brahmana will take birth at the house of a brahmana if he is following all the samskaras"

**Text D** says that "In kali-yuga no one is

brahmana by birth because samskaras are not followed"

Then if we combine these, we come to transform **text A** as "In kaliyuga one who has qualities of brahmana must do sandhya-vandanam thrice a day."

This is not a case of interpretation. Direct meaning of none of **texts A to D** is altered for reaching to the concluding text.

**Example of interpretation:**

In the case of sisupala, he started speaking ill of Lord Krishna in front of whole assembly. But whatever he was speaking Goddess Sarasvati made arrangements of words in such a way that they can have two meanings and the indirect meanings (lakṣaṇā vṛtti) of all these words were actually praising Lord Krishna. Thus ācāryas reveal those indirect meanings in order for devotees to relish this lila. Here is one such example from SP's Krishna Book:

"We cannot even ascertain which caste this Kṛṣṇa belongs to or what His actual occupational duty is." Actually, Kṛṣṇa does not belong to any caste, nor does He have to perform any occupational duty. It is stated in the Vedas that the Supreme Lord has nothing to do as His prescribed duty. Whatever has to be done on His behalf is executed by His different energies. (Krishna Book, Ch. 74)

The words used by sisupala were,

***varṇāśrama-kulāpetah***

*apetaḥ* means devoid of. Thus it means devoid of varṇāśrama, kula dharmas.

**Sridhara Svami writes—**

*varṇāśrama-kulebhyaḥ apetaḥ brahmatvāt "anāmagotram" iti śruteḥ.*

"He is above varnasrama and kula dharmas because He is Supreme Brahman as is said in the sruti 'He is without any Name or Gotra.' "

**What rules are used:**

**Text A:** Krishna is Supreme Brahman (from sruti)

**Text B:** Supreme Brahman is above varnasrama rules (from upanisads)

**Text C:** Krishna is devoid of varnasrama (from current verse)

Now Mukhya-vṛtti (direct meaning) of current verse is that Krishna is outcaste and thus have all low abominable qualities.

But this meaning cannot be accepted as it clashes with the higher evidences from sruti and smritis. It is a well established fact that Krishna is above three modes of nature.

Thus another possible indirect meaning (lakṣaṇā vṛtti) of this verse that Krishna is above varnasrama and thus is devoid of varnasrama is taken.

Hope these examples help.

Thankyou,

Your servant,

damodara das

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Thu, Jan 17, 2019 at 6:04 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com

Cc: damodara.bvks@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
carlwoodham@gmail.com,



brss108@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
sati.bts@gmail.com,  
krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,  
pdb108@yahoo.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Dear Krishna Kirti Prabhu,

Thank you for taking the time to answer my question in such detail. You have clearly explained your understanding of how Prabhupada's statements do not contradict sastra.

My next question is about siksa guru. Is a woman being a siksa guru against her svabhava or is it allowed because it is the svabhava of a brahmani? If it is not against her svabhava, why do you suppose sastra would allow her to be a siksa guru but not a diksa guru, i.e. why is one inappropriate whereas and the other not?

(This is not a challenge but a call for a philosophical look at this, which I think will help the general discussion of female diksa gurus)

Today I was posing this question to myself: Who is better off, a person who took initiation from Prabhupada but never listened to his lectures or read his books, or a person who never took initiation from Prabhupada or anyone else, and listened to his lectures and read his books and continues to do so today. The question, of course, asks what's more important, siksa or diksa, to which the general answer we are given is that siksa is most important because it is the siksa that guides one back to godhead. This then gives more importance to the siksa guru.

Therefore, would it be inappropriate, for example, if someone initiated disciples and had no siksa connection with them, and their entire siksa connection was with a female siksa guru. In other words, the diksa guru was only initiating because she couldn't initiate, but beyond that, she takes responsibility. If she is allowed to be siksa guru, this could likely happen. I ask this because i am interested in knowing how we see the qualifications between a siksa guru and a diksa guru differ? Many gurus have told me their siksa disciples are often better than their diksa disciples, i.e. the relationship is closer, they are more surrendered, they do more service, etc. So in many cases the relationship between a siksa guru and disciple is more intimate than between a diksa guru and disciple. Again, if a woman can be a siksa guru, how is she capable of doing this but not giving diksa?

Honestly, this question is not a challenge. I feel these are important questions to consider, because if a woman can perform the function of siksa guru well, it naturally begs the question as to what is the difference between the two gurus. Of course you have answered this question already by stating a woman cannot be a diksa guru, , but for the sake of getting more clarity, I would like to look at this issue through the understanding the relative importance of the different gurus and thus help us understand why a woman would be qualified (if you agree she is) for one role and not the other.

BTW, I found the idea of a vaisya initiation interesting. Yes, many initiated brahmanas were hopeful of becoming full fledged brahmanas but didn't yet have the samskaras.

Nice discussing these topics with you.

Hare Krisihna,

Mahatma das

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And for this example, let's say we all concur that she is at least on the stage of nistha.

Is your point that she cannot initiate her siksa disciples because she must be above the modes of nature to do this service, even if it appears she is has shown she competent to give shelter to disciples? In other words, doing a good job is not the criteria for her guruship because sastra says only a perfected woman can do this service? (For the sake of this example, let's accept that it appears she is doing as good a job giving shelter to her disciples as her male guru godbrothers>)

Have I correctly represented you?

Your servant,.

Mahatma das

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PM India Standard Time,**

[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com) writes:

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Thu, Jan 17, 2019 at 6:05 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: [krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)

Cc: [damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com),  
[chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com),

[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com),

[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com),

[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com),

[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com),

[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com),

[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com),

[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com),

[pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com),

[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com),

[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com),

[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com),

[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net),

[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com),

[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com),

[BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net),

[dhruva.k.108@gmail.com](mailto:dhruva.k.108@gmail.com),

[divyajps@yahoo.com](mailto:divyajps@yahoo.com),

[Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net),

[Kratudas108@yahoo.com](mailto:Kratudas108@yahoo.com),

mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Dear Krishna Kirti Prabhu,

Thank you for taking the time to answer my question in such detail. You have clearly explained your understanding of how Prabhupada's statements do not contradict sastra.

My next question is about siksa guru. Is a woman being a siksa guru against her svabhava or is it allowed because it is the svabhava of a brahmani? If it is not against her svabhava, why do you suppose sastra would allow her to be a siksa guru but not a diksa guru, i.e. why is one inappropriate whereas and the other not?

(This is not a challenge but a call for a philosophical look at this, which I think will help the general discussion of female diksa gurus)

Today I was posing this question to myself: Who is better off, a person who took initiation from Prabhupada but never listened to his lectures or read his books, or a person who never took initiation from Prabhupada or anyone else, and listened to his lectures and read his books and continues to do so today. The question, of course, asks what's more important, siksa or diksa, to which the general answer we are given is that siksa is most important because it is the siksa that guides one back to godhead. This then gives more importance to the siksa guru.

Therefore, would it be inappropriate, for example, if someone initiated disciples and had no siksa connection with them, and their entire siksa connection was with a female siksa guru. In other words, the diksa guru was only initiating because she couldn't initiate, but beyond that, she takes responsibility. If she is allowed to be siksa guru, this could likely happen. I ask this because i am interested in knowing how we see the qualifications between a siksa guru and a diksa guru differ? Many gurus have told me their siksa disciples are often better than their diksa disciples, i.e. the relationship is closer, they are more surrendered, they do more service, etc. So in many cases the relationship between a siksa guru and disciple is more intimate than between a diksa guru and disciple. Again, if a woman can be a siksa guru, how is she capable of doing this but not giving diksa?

Honestly, this question is not a challenge. I feel these are important questions to consider, because if a woman can perform the function of siksa guru well, it naturally begs the question as to what is the difference between the two gurus. Of course you have answered this question already by stating a woman cannot be a diksa guru, , but for the sake of getting more clarity, I would like to look at this issue through the understanding the relative importance of the different gurus and thus help us understand why a woman would be qualified (if you agree she is) for one role and not the other.

BTW, I found the idea of a vaisya initiation interesting. Yes, many initiated brahmanas were hopeful of becoming full fledged brahmanas but didn't yet have the samskaras.

Nice discussing these topics with you.

Hare Krisihna,

Mahatma das

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**Krishnarupa Dasi**

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

Thu, Jan  
17, 2019 at  
10:03 PM

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com,

pancaratnadas@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com,

brss108@gmail.com,

askindredspirits@gmail.com,

nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com,

suresvara@gmail.com,

ajitacozzi@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,

bbks108@gmail.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com,

BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,

divyajps@yahoo.com,

Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Dear SABHA members

I was talking briefly to Visakha prabhu yesterday and she mentioned only one person had replied to her email re women giving diksa.

If anyone else is able to, as a courtesy, please respond to her.

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**Lana Morozova**

<morozova.svetlana@gmail.com>

Fri, Jan 18,  
2019 at  
10:28 AM

To: Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>,

Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com,

pancaratnadas@gmail.com,



carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
brss108@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
sati.bts@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Hare Krishna, I just noticed that Mother Vishakha's email is excluded from this email string. She is definitely on Google group. Please, the next person to send a reply here do not forget to check if her address is in: [dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)



"pdb108@yahoo.com"  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>,  
"narahari@naraharidas.com"  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>,  
"suresvara@gmail.com"  
<suresvara@gmail.com>,  
"ajitacozzi@gmail.com"  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
"atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net"  
<atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
"bbks108@gmail.com"  
<bbks108@gmail.com>,  
"janardanagkg@gmail.com"  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>,  
"bdds.bts@pamho.net"  
<bdds.bts@pamho.net>,  
"dhruva.k.108@gmail.com"  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,  
"divyajps@yahoo.com"  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>,  
"drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net"  
<drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>,  
"kratudas108@yahoo.com"  
<kratudas108@yahoo.com>,  
"mpd.vda@gmail.com"  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>,  
"mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net"  
<mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>,  
"mahatmadasa@gmail.com"

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>,  
"ruciradasi@gmail.com"  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>,  
"siddha\_007@163.com"  
<siddha\_007@163.com>,  
"janavidevi@hotmail.com"  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>,  
"sriradhita@gmail.com"  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>,  
"vrnda16@icloud.com"  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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I wrote to her to thank her for her wise and excellent response.

Ys,  
Rukmini

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**From:** Lana Morozova <[morozova.svetlana@gmail.com](mailto:morozova.svetlana@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 18, 2019 10:29 AM

**To:** Krishnarupa Dasi

**Cc:** Mahatma Das; Krishna Kirti Das; Damodara Dasa; [chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com); [pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com); [carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com); [brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com); [askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com); [nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com); [sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com); [pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com); [narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com); [suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com); [ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com); [atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net); [bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com); [janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com); [bdds.bts@pamho.net](mailto:bdds.bts@pamho.net); [dhruva.k.108@gmail.com](mailto:dhruva.k.108@gmail.com); [divyajps@yahoo.com](mailto:divyajps@yahoo.com); [drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net); [kratudas108@yahoo.com](mailto:kratudas108@yahoo.com); [mpd.vda@gmail.com](mailto:mpd.vda@gmail.com); [mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net); [mahatmadasa@gmail.com](mailto:mahatmadasa@gmail.com); [ruciradasi@gmail.com](mailto:ruciradasi@gmail.com); [siddha\\_007@163.com](mailto:siddha_007@163.com); [janavidevi@hotmail.com](mailto:janavidevi@hotmail.com); [sriradhita@gmail.com](mailto:sriradhita@gmail.com); [vrnda16@icloud.com](mailto:vrnda16@icloud.com)

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Sat, Jan 19,

2019 at 11:51 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: "ajitacozzi@gmail.com"

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

"atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net"

<atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

"bbks108@gmail.com"

<bbks108@gmail.com>,

"bdds.bts@pamho.net"

<bdds.bts@pamho.net>,

"brss108@gmail.com"

<brss108@gmail.com>,

"carlwoodham@gmail.com"

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>,

"chandraswami108@hotmail.com"

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,

Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>,

"dhruva.k.108@gmail.com"

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,

"divyajps@yahoo.com"

<divyajps@yahoo.com>,

"drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net"

<drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>,

"janardanagkg@gmail.com"

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>,

"janavidevi@hotmail.com"  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>,  
"kratudas108@yahoo.com"  
<kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa  
Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Lana  
Morozova <morozova.svetlana@gmail.com>,  
"mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net"  
<mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>,  
"mahatmadasa@gmail.com"  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>,  
"mpd.vda@gmail.com"  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>,  
"narahari@naraharidas.com"  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>,  
"nrsimhananda@gmail.com"  
<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>,  
"pancaratnadas@gmail.com"  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>,  
"pdb108@yahoo.com"  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>,  
"ruciradasi@gmail.com"  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>,  
"sati.bts@gmail.com" <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
"siddha\_007@163.com"  
<siddha\_007@163.com>,  
"sriradhita@gmail.com"  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>,  
"suresvara@gmail.com"



<suresvara@gmail.com>,  
"vrnda16@icloud.com"  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Mahatma Prabhu, and other Maharajas, Prabhus, and Matas. Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Before I respond to Mahatma Prabhu's latest remarks and queries, I would like to just point out that I have attached a text file with all the recipients on this conversation - from and to. Before I had advised Nrisimhananda Prabhu to set up an email mailing list with google groups, and for a time it was there, and now I don't know what happened to it as I no longer have access. I was going to make it a habit of only directly emailing those not on the list and leaving the rest on the list, while encouraging those not on the list to respond to the invitations they had sent to get on the list. And gradually, everyone would transition to that list. But since I'm either no longer a member of it, or that list has been deactivated, I can't do that. In any case, I still think using the list is a good idea. But as a work-around, I have attached with this list a text file that may be used for maintaining who is or is not a recipient.

Now, to Mahatma Prabhu's email.

On Thu, Jan 17, 2019 at 6:05 PM Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

Dear Krishna Kirti Prabhu,

Thank you for taking the time to answer my question in such detail. You have clearly explained your understanding of how Prabhupada's statements do not contradict sastra.

One question here: where do you see that we are on the same page, and where do you see that we differ in our views? Don't worry about having to justify them. It's just enough at this point that we know what our own conceptions of how we understand spiritual topics is alike and different.

My next question is about siksa guru. Is a woman being a siksa guru against her svabhava or is it allowed because it is the svabhava of a brahmani? If it is not against her svabhava, why do you suppose sastra would allow her to be a siksa guru but not a diksa guru, i.e. why is one inappropriate whereas and the other not?

This is where our social theology has a run-in with modern social theory.

For example, if the shastra says that the stool of an animal is impure, and hence if one touches it one has to bathe. But it also says that the stool of the cow is pure. It doesn't give any further explanation, it just says that.

Now, when Srila Prabhupada explained this, he also noted that modern science has confirmed that cow dung has antiseptic properties. Nevertheless, the truth of the statement from shastra does not depend on our understanding how it is true. It is only required that we accept it as true.

And that's actually necessary that we accept the truth of shastra because there are limits to what we can practically understand by observation and experience.

For example, in the news recently in America, it was widely claimed on news reports that the current executive administration only caught six illegal immigrants who were also on a terrorist list coming through America's border with Mexico. Many news outlets reported this as evidence that the threat of terrorist infiltration was very less, or that the program was ineffective. But either way, one thing you don't know is the true number of actual terrorists that try to get into America and either fail or succeed. And the reason you don't know is that terrorists are people who don't want you to know who they really are.

So, six as compared to what would be the true number of terrorists attempting to get into America? Maybe that number is 12, maybe it's 1200. Some educated guesses are made, but you don't really know for sure. Six as compared to how many actual terrorists evaded detection? Only twenty terrorists destroyed the World Trade center in 2001, so 6 is 30% of a team that can kill thousands of people at once. Again, you don't know the true number of terrorists that have gotten in, but the consequences of being a little bit wrong can be catastrophic.

The general problem with social science is that for innumerable reasons, people don't want you to know things about them or know about them at all. But you, the planner, or voter, in the absence of facts go with what you believe to be true. Your "facts" are often little more than belief, often incorrect-- sometimes dangerously or fatally incorrect. Thus social science by nature is fundamentally a speculative enterprise, even after various scientific methods are used to try to reduce that uncertainty.

Another example closer to home illustrates this. In 2007, Satyaraja Prabhu (Steven

Rosen) wrote an article titled "1965 was a Very Good Year" for the book *The Hare Krishna Movement: Forty Years of Chant and Change* (London, I.B. Taurus, 2007). And in his article, he notes that "Sociologists and historians of religion have posited that this particular year [1965] was critically significant, that had Prabhupada made his journey either a year earlier or later, he would not have achieved the same degree of success." They offer their reasons for this. Some include immigration law, the rise of the Counterculture, etc. If you categorize them, you will find that they inevitably are some form of material cause. None of their suggested causes are theistic. None of them include Krishna's hand in all of this and how He can empower His pure devotee to do anything in any time, place, or circumstance, or indeed, that the circumstances themselves are an arrangement made by the Lord for the success of His pure devotee. The atheists don't believe this, and so it is not a part of their calculus when trying to explain things.

So, who is right, the materialistic theories or the theistic ones? Some might hedge their bets and say both are right, but is that a tenable position? When you also accept that

Krishna is the cause of all causes and directly guides his pure devotee, then it doesn't matter what year that Srila Prabhupada would have come. As an empowered representative of Krishna his success would have come in one way or another. And social scientists would make up some other set of non-theistic explanations to account for his success. Simply by observation alone one would never be able to understand the true cause of Srila Prabhupada's success.

Because of this inability to understand true causes by observation and experience, it is necessary to act according to shastra and the acharyas, even if one does not adequately understand the reasons why. Therefore, in light of this, in response to Mahtma Prabhu's question:

My next question is about siksa guru. Is a woman being a siksa guru against her svabhava or is it allowed because it is the svabhava of a brahmani? If it is not against her svabhava, why do you suppose sastra would allow her to be a siksa guru but not a diksa guru, i.e. why is one inappropriate whereas and the other not?

Giving shiksha is allowed by shastra.  
Bharadvaja-samhita 1.43 explicitly allows it.

*striyaḥ sūdrādayaś caiva bodhayeyur hitāhitam |  
yathārham mānanīyāś ca nārhanṭy ācāryatām kvacit* ||43||

“Women, *sūdras*, etc., can give ethical and moral instructions and are also worthy of respect as per their qualifications and conditions but are not entitled to get the



position of *ācārya*.”

Again, this is women who are still sadhakas and still to some degree under the influence of material nature, not those who are siddha, or who are at least on the level of bhava. This will, of course, be the vast majority of women.

It is not necessary for us to understand why, but it is enough to understand that it is not permitted. But the shastras and acharyas do give some indication as to the reasons for this.

To see why this might be, let's begin with the Shastric Advisory Council's 2005 paper on female diksa-gurus. Although in their paper they reject the idea that there may be any material qualification imposed specifically for women apart from men, at the very end of their paper they give a recommendation for special material facilities be given to women to enable them to function as diksa-guru.

They say,

The Vaiṣṇavī should normally have some family support, e.g. husband, adult son or daughter or adult son-in-law or daughter-in-law, and a residential base to ensure her psycho-social stability.

And this recommendation has made it into this year's subcommittee recommendation.

But if women who are also supposed to be advanced devotees still need this for their psycho-physical nature, then why don't the other aspects of their psychology mentioned by the shastras and the acharyas also apply? They do apply.

Srila Prabhupada sometimes quoted Manusamhita in this regard.

Prabhupada: And the Western countries, they have been taught to become independent. That is artificial. That is all artificial. So woman by nature... Manusamhita [9.3] says, na striyam svatantram arhati: "Women should not be given independence." They must be protected by the father, by husband, and by elderly sons. They are not independent. No independence. Even Kunti, the mother of such big, big sons, she was not independent. (Room Conversation -- January 7, 1977, Bombay)

Note here that Srila Prabhupada is using Manu-samhita and the example of Kunti Devi to criticize modern Western culture. That means this cannot be dismissed as applicable in some other time but not this day and age. Women are not supposed to be independent in *this day and age*. The role of acharya is performed by a brahmana, and a brahmana by definition must be independent.

Now, for those women who are currently burnishing their credentials to become acharyas, we see that they make it a point to travel very widely and extensively, and independently, like the men, to preach. But they should not be doing that, because it's against the shastras.

Srila Prabhupada said,

So this Kardama Muni did it. Because he was a yogi, he strictly followed the principle. So as soon as Kapiladeva was grown up, the mother, Devahuti, was given in His charge and Kardama Muni left home. Therefore it is said that pitari prasthite aranyam matuh priya-cikirsaya. Now, it is the duty of the son. Women should be

under the protection. In the Manu-samhita it is said that woman should not be given freedom. Na stri svatantryam arhati. They cannot properly utilize freedom. It is better to remain dependent. That is very good. Independent woman cannot be happy. That's a fact. We have seen in the Western countries, on..., in the name of independence, so many women are unhappy. So that is not recommended in the Vedic civilization and on the varnasrama-dharma. So therefore the mother, Devahuti, was given under the charge of his [her] grown-up son, Kapiladeva. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.25.5-6 -- November 5, 1974, Bombay)

Again, he is quoting Manu-samhita, and again he is using the example of Devahuti and Manu-samhita as the basis of criticism of current Western culture. Note that he says, "They [women] cannot properly utilize freedom." That means it applies to modern women. And because he is taking the example of Devahuti, a topmost devotee, it also applies to devotees.

This is very tough for modern women and many modern men to accept--even if they

are members of ISKCON. But just as accepting on the basis of Vedic authority that the stool of the cow is pure one saves much time and trouble and comes to the correct conclusion, one should accept these injunctions about women and independence and the inability of women to utilize it. Then that will save one much trouble.

Otherwise, society gives rise to a #MeToo movement. The atheists are still looking for some explanation for the failure. But if they accept the Vedic version then they can quickly find a solution, not otherwise.

So, as to why women cannot be diksa-guru, the explanations given by shastra and acharyas are they require independence, which Srila Prabhupada says they cannot properly utilize. That is why Bharadvaja-samhita puts such a high bar on women being able to act as acharya, that they factually be free from the bodily conception of life, and that starts at bhava-bhakti. Then you don't need any of these so-called "relative prerequisites" to be able to function as acharya.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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**pancaratnadas**

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 20,  
2019 at 11:21  
AM

To: Krishna Kirti Das  
<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>

Cc: ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com, bdds.bts@pamho.net,  
brss108@gmail.com,  
carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com, Damodara  
Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
kratudas108@yahoo.com, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Lana  
Morozova <morozova.svetlana@gmail.com>,



mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com,  
nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
pdb108@yahoo.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>,  
sati.bts@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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So what about someone like me, the person who gave me diksha has given up that platform and though I take siksha from someone else, I see Prabhupada as my pre-eminent siksha guru and I take shelter of him.

My feeling is I am serving Prabhupada and I take shelter of Prabhupada but my siksha guru helps and guides me.

Is that correct or do you see my living siksha guru more important than my relationship with Prabhupada as pre-eminent siksha guru.

I feel that a siksha guru is important but equal to a diksha guru, not more than. But

the pre-eminent siksha guru may be more important, what do you feel about that.

Your servant pancaratna dasa

Sent from my MI MAX 2

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Sun, Jan 20, 2019

at 10:32 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: pancaratnadas

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami

<atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB

Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
"BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS

(Lagos - NG)" <bdds.bts@pamho.net>,  
Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris  
Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,  
Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa

Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Kratu Das <kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Lana Morozova <morozova.svetlana@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Pancharatna Prabhu and others, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Response in-line below:

On Sun, Jan 20, 2019 at 11:21 AM  
pancaratnadas <[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>  
wrote:

So what about someone like me, the person who gave me diksha has given up that platform and though I take siksha from someone else, I see Prabhupada as my pre-eminent siksha guru and I take shelter of him.

That's how it is in other sampradayas, too. For example, in Sri Sampradaya, Ramanujacarya is considered the pre-eminent shiksha-guru. He would be considered to be in the category of great Rishis or aryanas who are famous for strictly following Vedic principles and culture. Such persons are considered liberated souls, and as liberated souls, their words and actions are not subject to criticism or dispute. That is, their testimony can never be rejected.

Below them, you have your ordinary gurus (ordinary in the sense that they are not widely renowned like Ramanuja or Madhva),

and they may or may not be liberated souls. Usually they are not liberated souls, that is, still subject to the influence of the material energy. Therefore, there are injunctions in the shastra that say what to do when one's guru has deviated.

For example, in SB 8.20.1 purport, Srila Prabhupada quotes Mahabharata

guror apy avaliptasya  
kāryākāryam ajānataḥ  
utpatha-pratipannasya  
parityāgo vidhīyate

If a guru is arrogant and proud, does not know what is to be done and not to be done, and takes shelter of the wrong path, then he is to be abandoned.  
(Mahābhārata, Udyog Parva 178.48 - Gita Press edition, Hindi)

These verses are addressed to the category of non-liberated acharya, who will be the vast majority of your gurus at any given time simply because liberated souls are always very rare.

So, Srila Prabhupada does not belong to this category of guru. He is in a higher category, and these rules don't apply to him. His words are always to be taken as authoritative. Because he is in a higher category, he is

accorded more authority than an ordinary guru.

My feeling is I am serving Prabhupada and I take shelter of Prabhupada but my siksha guru helps and guides me.

Is that correct or do you see my living siksha guru more important than my relationship with Prabhupada as pre-eminent siksha guru.

I feel that a siksha guru is important but equal to a diksha guru, not more than. But the pre-eminent siksha guru may be more important, what do you feel about that.

If you look at current ISKCON Law on qualifications required to be guru in ISKCON, you can be a madhyama-adhikari and qualify without much difficulty. ISKCON Law is biased toward creating madhyama-adhikari diksa-gurus, and this is a problem because by definition, they have strong faith but are not shastra-yukti, or experts in shastra. As such, Srila Prabhupada notes at the end of text 5 in the Nectar of Instruction

that such madhyama-adhikaris, though they may become acharya or guru, their disciples will struggle to make spiritual advancement under their insufficient guidance.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 7:14 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com

Cc: damodara.bvks@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com,

pancaratnadas@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com,

brss108@gmail.com,

askindredspirits@gmail.com,

nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,

pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com,

suresvara@gmail.com,

ajitacozzi@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,

bbks108@gmail.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com,

BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,



dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Krishna Kirti Prabhu,

I hit reply all but it's not showing anyone else is receiving (on my phone now).. If this is the case, can you forward this email to our list?

Thank you

Mahatma das

Below is the email I am sending today.

I am in Hyderabad now and spent time speaking to a lifetime Sri Vaisnava from a family of many generations of Sri Vaisnavas. This devotee is quite familiar with their history.

I asked do you have female diksa gurus. She

said yes.

I asked if there are different qualifications for males and female diksa gurus in the Sri Sampradaya. She said no.

I asked how the Gurus are approved. She said if someone is having sisyas they will interview the sisyas and if they are doing well the acharyas will ask the siksa guru to initiate.. This process is applicable for both men and women..

Are there many women gurus? She said not so many because they are more inclined to put time into their families and not be public figures.

Did Ramanuja discourage women from giving diksa unless they were siddha? No, he never discouraged women from giving diksa until they were siddha. Same qualifications for both i. e. they are qualified by actually being a guru to their disciples..

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

---

On Tuesday, January 15, 2019 Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Mahatma Prabhu and others, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to

Srila Prabhupada.

You wrote:

And for this example, let's say we all concur that she is at least on the stage of nistha.

As an FYI for everyone, this condition has its origin in the Śāstric Advisory Council's 2005 paper, where they make this recommendation.

##### SAC 2005 #####

8) “A woman's nature has been particularly well studied by Kaśyapa Muni. Women are self-interested by nature, and therefore they should be protected by all means so that their natural inclination to be too self-interested will not be manifested. Women need to be protected by men. A woman should be cared for by her father in her childhood, by her husband in her youth and by her grown sons in her old age. This is the injunction of Manu, who says that a woman should not be given independence at any stage. Women must

be cared for so that they will not be free to manifest their natural tendency for gross selfishness. There have been many cases, even in the present day, in which women have killed their husbands to take advantage of their insurance policies. This is not a criticism of women but a practical study of their nature.”

Women on the bodily platform are selfish and should therefore be protected not only from lusty male predators but from their own lower natures as well. This is clear. The rest of the purport below, however, makes an important distinction.

“Such natural instincts of a woman or a man are manifested only in the bodily conception of life. When either a man or a woman is advanced in spiritual consciousness, the bodily conception of life practically vanishes.” (Bhāg. 6.18.42 purport)

Here is a suggestion in relation to the above

point: The bodily concept of life is transcended, along with the modes of nature, at the stage of bhāva-bhakti. But at the level of niṣṭhā the residual anarthas are only remnants that not longer obstruct one's progress (See Madhurya-kādambinī, chapter 4). Therefore, we recommend that at least the symptoms of niṣṭhā should be seen in dīkṣā-guru candidates, whether male or female.

##### END SAC 2005 #####

Is your point that she cannot initiate her siksa disciples because she must be above the modes of nature to do this service, even if it appears she is has shown she competent to give shelter to disciples?

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Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 7:25 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com

Cc: damodara.bvks@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com,

nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,

pdb108@yahoo.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com,  
brss108@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Before I answer your questions, I am interested how you reconcile the many statements in which he differentiated women and vaisnavi?s? In other words he was distinguishing his female disciples from the women he speaks about as having certain frailties. He made this point on various

occasions.

## Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

On Tuesday, January 15, 2019 Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

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Tue, Jan 22, 2019

at 7:33 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>

To: Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>, Sati devi dasi

<[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)>, Carl Woodham

<[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>, David Shapiro

<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>, Krishnarupa

Dasi <[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>,

Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<[pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com)>, Narahari

<[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com)>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>,

Richard Hall <[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com)>, Ajita

Cozzi <[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com)>,

Atmanivedana Swami

<[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net)>, BB

Keshava Swami <[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com)>,

Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com)>, "BDDS (Bhakti

Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"



<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva  
Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,  
Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>,  
"Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles -  
USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>,  
Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>,  
Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>,  
"Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>,  
Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradas@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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My obeisances at your feet, Mahatma  
Prabhu. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 7:26 PM Mahatma  
Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

Before I answer your questions, I am  
interested how you reconcile the many  
statements in which he differentiated

women and vaisnavi's? In other words he was distinguishing his female disciples from the women he speaks about as having certain frailties. He made this point on various occasions.

If you could some examples here, that would help me in attempting to respond to your query.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Tue, Jan 22, 2019  
at 7:34 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa

Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,

Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita

Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Correction:

"If you could some examples here, that

would help me in attempting to respond to your query."

should read

"If you could **provide** some examples here, that would help me in attempting to respond to your query."

Apologies for the imprecision.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 7:39 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com

Cc: damodara.bvks@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com,

nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,

pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com,

brss108@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com,

ajitacozzi@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,

bbks108@gmail.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Before I answer the questions, I would like to ask one more question.. Do you have any evidence that women during the era of Suniti took diksa because prabhupada explains there was a time when women did not have gurus, but served their husbands and received the benefits of his service.

If she and other women at this time in history followed this tradition, of course no woman could initiate unless she somehow was allowed to take diksa for diksa definitely cannot be given unless one has diksa.

I asked this question before but didn't get a yes or no answer. This would require some historical evidence. According to what I have read from Prabhupada, traditionally women did not take diksa, did not attend gurukula, etc.

Does anyone have evidence that Suniti did transgress this system.. If not, this would be one of the reasons (I can think of others} women like Suniti at that time couldnt initiate.

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Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 7:45 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com,  
brss108@gmail.com

Cc: krishnakirti@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
sati.bts@gmail.com,  
krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,  
pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Damodara Prabhu,

That quote said he will see vrndavana in svsrvoa sidfhi. So the assumption is if he see vraja he will see Radha and krsna. Coukd you provide any references where it directly says at bhava one sees krsna face to face, as opposed to this happening at prema (premanjana churita...)

**Sent from AOL Mobile Mail**



On Wednesday, January 16, 2019 Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)> wrote:

Respected BRS Maharaja,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

Thankyou for your question which may be useful for others also. Below is my explanation for the meaning of the word:

Bharadvaja Samhita (Narada Pancaratra)  
1.44:

*kim apy atrābhijāyante yoginaḥ sarva-yoniṣu |*

***pratyakṣitātma-nāthānām*** *naiṣām cintyaṁ kulādikam ||44||*

“But, because perfect yogis (or *nitya-siddha* devotees) who are on the stage of *yoga-pratyakṣa* (i.e. are self-realized – seeing God face-to-face), *pratyakṣitātma-nāthānām*, may take birth in any family tradition, in such cases no consideration of *kula*, gender, etc. as mentioned earlier apply (they can become *ācāryas*).”

The original word in the verse is  
***pratyakṣitātmanāthānām***. It means,

***pratyakṣita ātmanaḥ nāthaḥ yaiḥ  
teṣām***

***pratyakṣita***—directly perceiving; ***ātmanaḥ***—  
of the soul; ***nāthaḥ***—Lord or master; ***yaiḥ***—

by whom; *teṣām*—of those

"Of those who are directly perceiving the Lord of the souls."

Seeing God face-to-face is used to generally express such notions. It doesn't mean just seeing but all perceptions. Srila Prabhupada uses this term in Bg 15.7 purport,

The following information is there in the *Mādhyandināyana-śruti: sa vā eṣa brahma-niṣṭha idaṁ śarīraṁ martyam atisṛjya brahmābhisampadya brahmaṇā paśyati brahmaṇā śṛṇoti brahmaṇaivedaṁ sarvam anubhavati*. It is stated here that when a living entity gives up this material embodiment and enters into the spiritual world, he revives his spiritual body, and in his spiritual body he can **see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face**. He can hear and speak to Him face to face, and he can understand the Supreme Personality as He is.

As the Lord cannot be seen by material senses it means that the devotee, mentioned in BS 1.44, has become svarūpa-siddha i.e. he is on the bhāva-bhakti platform where one starts seeing (or perceiving) the Lord.

## Bhaktivinoda Thakura says—

If one progresses through the stages of faith, practice, purification, steadiness, taste and attachment, in either *vaidhi* or *rāgānuga-sādhana*, one **then comes to the stage of *bhāva***, preliminary prema. It is at this point that one attains *āpana-daśā*. At this stage, beyond the category of *sādhana-bhakti*, when scriptural rules will be discarded as troublesome to one's service, conceptions of *rāgānuga* and *vaidhi* will both be discarded.

Here, one's identification with the material body will vanish and identification with one's spiritual body will predominate. **In that spiritual body (*svarūpa-siddhi*) one will always see Vṛndāvana and serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.** This final stage is called *sampatti-daśā*.

—Harināma Cintāmaṇī, 15

Hope this helps all.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

On Sun, Jan 13, 2019 at 2:22 AM Bhakti  
Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>  
wrote:

Respected Prabhus, Damodara and Krishna  
Kirti.

Would you be kind enough to explain why  
do you interpret the word “Siddha” in the  
text as categorically meaning “one, who is  
seeing Krishna face to face”, as opposed to  
just a devotee of Krishna?

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

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Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 8:33 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com,  
brss108@gmail.com

Cc: krishnakirti@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com,

pancaratnadas@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com,

askindredspirits@gmail.com,

nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,

pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com,

suresvara@gmail.com,

ajitacozzi@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,

bbks108@gmail.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com,

BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,

divyajps@yahoo.com,

Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,

Kratudas108@yahoo.com,

mpd.vda@gmail.com,

Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Damodara Prabhu,

Because prabhupada did not specifically say why a woman cannot initiate in that purport, and not seeing prabhupada discriminate much in the preaching field, my first thought was how could a woman without a guru give diksa. It's not the only qualification, but there is no question of giving diksa if you don't have diksa. And if women didn't get diksa it makes sense that as a woman she couldn't give it.

When prabhupada asked us to be guru, he told us it was our duty. So yes, with being initiated comes the responsibility to accept disciples. He never ever told us that this was not women's svadhsrma but every disciples dharma..

We are not talking about ksstriyas and vaisyas not being able to give diksa, we are talking about Prabhupada's disciples.. You

assume that when prabhupada said sons and daughters he had two different standards because of women's frailties and you try to prove your point by referencing sastra.. If your line of thinking is to accepted, then we would see Prabhupada preventing women from other services for which their female frailties would be their disqualification..

For example in the verses quoted from. Bhsradvsj Samhita, it does not say women can give spiritual instruction, only moral and ethical. Why are they being restricted? We could speculate that they have frailties, need protection, are less intelligent, etc. But why would we even go there when we know prabhupada encouraged them to preach. I see your arguments in a similar way.

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

---

On Wednesday, January 16, 2019 Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)> wrote:

Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances,

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

It was proposed in this forum that Suniti could not become diksa-guru of Dhruva Maharaja because in vedic times women were not initiated and thus, as she could not receive diksa, she could not give diksa

**Point to be noted:** Srila Prabhupada did not involve the reason that because woman

could not get diksa they could not become diksa-guru

There are two possibilities for Suniti's case why she could not become diksa-guru (SB 4.12.32 purport):

- a) Only because she did not receive diksa, being woman is just an instrumental reason
- b) Only because of her feminine gender

If case 'a' is true, then those who receive diksa should be able to give diksa also. But we see in those times ksatriyas and vaisyas also did receive diksa but could not give diksa because they were not brahmanas. So there was something else that stopped them from giving diksa.

Similarly there was something else besides not receiving diksa due to which Suniti could not become guru. This something else was being a woman (the only left option). Thus, case 'b' stands correct.

If we see in pacnacatras, then we get clear description that women can receive diksa but cannot give it.

Thus, case 'b' stands clear: **Suniti could not become diksa-guru because she was a Woman. No need to imagine any other reason.**

This something else is actually an order to not engage in para-dharma, or other's duties not meant for one's position. (Bg 3.35, 18.47, SB 7.15.12-13). This is so much important that even Lord Krishna Himself doesn't transgress this although he is ever liberated and instructs even liberated souls not to transgress it (Bg 3.17-25). This is a very elaborate subject matter and may be explained in detail later— how para-dharma, even if followed by liberated souls, destroys varnasrama.

Thankyou,

Your servant,

damodara das

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**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Fri, Jan 25,  
2019 at 10:57  
AM

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Bhakti  
Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,  
Krishna Kirti Das




<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,  
Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Carl  
Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com, Sati devi dasi  
<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
"Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana  
Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa  
Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya  
Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma  
(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura  
Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman  
(das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira  
dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯

<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Attached is a PRO VDG paper just released by Gaura Keshava pr. I invite everyone to study it carefully. Krishna Kirti/Damodar are certainly invited to respond. I've been pondering some paradigm wherein both views could be accommodated. Suggestions, welcomed. In the meantime, Gaura Keshava's thoughts need to be digested in time for the response sure to come by the different perspective of our SABHA guests.

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Fri, Jan 25,  
2019 at 11:46  
AM

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das  
<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,

Pancaratra Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Carl

Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,

Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>,

"Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA"

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

"Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana

Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa

Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya

Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma  
(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"

<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura

Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman  
(das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma

Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira

dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯

<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi

<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Mahatma Prabhu,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his  
faithful followers.

I apologize all members for my late reply.  
For information: I am travelling and am  
currently at Srirangam for a sravana-kirtana  
camp. I will be back to my place on 1st Jan  
wherefrom I will be able to regularly be  
active on this group. Till then you can expect  
some delays from my side; apologies in  
advance.

Below is my reply (in red) to Mahatma  
Prabhu's email dated 22nd Jan 2019; 20:33.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

Because prabhupada did not specifically say why a woman cannot initiate in that purport, ...

This is not true.

Prabhupada did give a difinitive reason that because of "being a woman" she could not

initiate. Srila Prabhupada did not go beyond that to speculate any reason besides her being a woman. Now when that is supported by sastras also, we should come to sure conclusion that being woman is an enough reason for one to be prohibited from becoming diksa-guru.

...and not seeing prabhupada discriminate much in the preaching field, my first thought was how could a woman without a guru give diksa. It's not the only qualification, but there is no question of giving diksa if you don't have diksa. And if women didn't get diksa it makes sense that as a woman she couldn't give it.

When prabhupada asked us to be guru, he told us it was our duty. So yes, with being initiated comes the responsibility to accept disciples.

Does it mean those who do not become diksa-guru are not following their responsibility and thus committing offense?

He never ever told us that this was not women's svadharma but every disciples dharma..

He repeatedly preached about varnasrama dharma and duties of different persons according to it. He gave standing orders of following it and re-establishing it in ISKCON. Varnasrama dharma is a high substantial part of his teachings in his books, and other sources. He wanted ISKCON devotees to follow it; in fact he wanted to start implementing varnasrama starting with ISKCON society (Conv. Feb. 14, 1977)—

**Satsvarūpa:** Introduced starting with ISKCON community?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Yes. Brāhmaṇa, kṣatriyas. There must be regular education.

We are not talking about ksatriyas and vaisyas not being able to give diksa, we are talking about Prabhupada's disciples..

Why not Ksatriyas. Do you want to say that Srila Prabhupada's followers are the only vaisnava devotees and not those Ksatriyas and Vaisyas?

I think you cannot just so easily brush out the argument of why Ksatriyas and Vaisyas were not allowed to give diksa although they did get diksa.

You must consider the examples of great siddha Ksatriyas like Pandavas, Manu, Lord Ramacandra and associates, Janaka, Prahlada, Bhisma, Bali Maharaja, etc. Why none of these became diksa-guru? Qualification of each of them was unlimitedly higher than all of ISKCON devotees put together.

**Also a must to answer:**

Why even great liberated devotee ladies like Kunti, Devaki, Yasoda, Rukmini, etc. none of these became diksa-guru?

Answer that we propose is very simple and fully supported by Bhagavad-gita (ch.3), Srimad Bhagavatam (7.15.12-13) and many more evidences. It is as follows—

Either conditioned or liberated, one must follow varnasrama dharma unless one takes leave from the societal dealings and become a babaji or avadhuta. This is for the reason of not deviating others from the path of dharma and thus create spiritual havoc in the society.

Para-dharma, or executing duties prescribed for others, is a big adharma and very dangerous for oneself and society (Bg 3.35, 18.47). Thus, none of the above became diksa-guru even though liberated; then what to speak of those who are conditioned.

You assume that when prabhupada said sons and daughters he had two different standards because of women's frailties and you try to prove your point by referencing

sastra.. If your line of thinking is to accepted, then we would see Prabhupada preventing women from other services for which their female frailties would be their disqualification..

According to his logic, women should also be allowed to take sannyas. But they are not.

If accepted the logic, you have presented, of “the evidence of one letter (to Hamsaduta, Jan 1969) represents our ideology,” then ritvikism should also be admitted as valid based on the July 9 letter.

For example in the verses quoted from. Bhsradvsj Samhita, it does not say women can give spiritual instruction, only moral and ethical. Why are they being restricted? We could speculate that they have frailties, need protection, are less intelligent, etc. But why would we even go there when we know prabhupada encouraged them to preach.

This statement seems selectively quoted. Prabhupada, in many occasions explained that he did want traditional roles for women in ISKCON. For instance—

Just like our women, Kṛṣṇa conscious, they are working. They don't want equal rights with men. It is due to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are cleansing the temple, they are cooking very nicely. They are satisfied. They never say that "I have to go to Japan for preaching like Prabhupāda." They never say. This is artificial. So Kṛṣṇa consciousness means work in his constitutional position. The women, men, when they remain in their constitutional position, there will be no artificial... (Conv. May 27, 1974)

There are many such statements of Prabhupada and thus it is a fact that there are two groups of disciples of Srila Prabhupada who are supporting stances opposite to each other. That this discussion is happening for last 20 years itself is a proof that there is a difference of opinion based on statements of Prabhupada.

Here is another one which shows that Srila Prabhupada wanted to apply rules of Manu Samhita also on ISKCON women although he could not do it due to inability of his disciples to accept them at once—

That the Brahmocarini ashram is a good success is very good news. But the best thing will be if the **grown-up Brahmocarinis get married. According to Vedic culture, woman is never to remain independent.** I shall be glad if the Brahmocarinis can have nice husbands, and live as Grhasthas. But if they cannot find out good husbands, it is better to remain a Brahmocarini all the life, even though it is little difficult. --- (Letter to Satsvarupa, Montreal, Aug 8, 1968)

...because in your country there is no distinction between boys and girls, or man and woman, they can freely mix without any restriction, **I did not give too much stricture on this point because by such stricture they might be annoyed, and whatever Krishna Consciousness they are trying to develop might have been checked.** --- (Letter to Satsvarupa, Montreal, Jul 12, 1968)

And there are many. I will not make this email long now. Anyone who wants to get collection of these quotes can write to me. I will send.





Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Mahatma Prabhu,  
My obeisances.

That quote said he will see vrndavana in svsrhoa sidfhi. So the assumption is if he see vraja he will see Radha and krsna. Coukd you provide any references where it directly says at bhava one sees krsna face to face, as opposed to this happening at prema (premanjana churita...)

**This is not an assumption. It is directly from the quote. What can be more direct.**

**When one sees Vraja he sees Radha Krishna**

and everything. Do you want to say that in bhava one sees Vraja devoid of Radha-Krishna? Besides that seeing means perceiving also. It is just a way to say, he sees. It means he perceives Radha Krishna with all his spiritual senses. This happens at Bhava stage as he gets svarupa-siddhi.

I think it is quite clear from the quote itself that he sees Radha-krsna. It is very direct. In prema stage he obviously sees Him face-to-face, it starts from bhava-stage.

Your servant,  
damodara das

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Fri, Jan 25, 2019 at 3:13 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com

Cc: brss108@gmail.com,  
krishnakirti@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
sati.bts@gmail.com,  
krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,

pdb108@yahoo.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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I found the reference I was looking for in Brahma samhita where in SBSST confirms one sees Krsna in the stage of bhava in the purport to premanjana churita... I was just looking for a more direct quote to confirm what yiu said and I found it. So, yes, bhava.

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Fri, Jan 25, 2019 at 3:25 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: damodara.bvks@gmail.com

Cc: brss108@gmail.com,

krishnakirti@gmail.com,

chandraswami108@hotmail.com,

pancaratnadas@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com,

askindredspirits@gmail.com,

nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com,

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,

pdb108@yahoo.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com,

suresvara@gmail.com,

ajitacozzi@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,

bbks108@gmail.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com,

BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,

divyajps@yahoo.com,

Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,

Kratudas108@yahoo.com,

mpd.vda@gmail.com,

Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,

mahatmadasa@gmail.com,

ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Damodara Prabhu

So am I correct in stating that your main point is not really the female diksa issue, but that the role of women in Iskcon in general is at odds with varnasrama culture? If I am correct, would you mind explaining other ways in which you feel females in iskcon have assumed wrong roles?

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

---

On Friday, January 25, 2019 Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)> wrote:

**Respected Mahatma Prabhu,**

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Fri, Jan 25, 2019 at  
3:52 PM

**Bhakti Rasayana Sagar**

<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>

To: David Shapiro

<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>

Cc: Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>,  
Damodara Dasa

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>,  
Krishna Kirti

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>, Krishna Kirti

Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, askindredspirits@gmail.com, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira

dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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We might spend very long time reflecting on different views, but I don't see any potential for any conclusion here.

The fact is that Prabhupada made different statements at different times and number of them seem to be in odds with each other. This is normal for those who agreed with his unity in diversity principle, but it's quite clear that there are devotees in our Movement who are not broad minded, or have "broader intelligence", as Prabhupada put it in SB 2.3.10, but are narrow-minded. The problem with the last category is that they insist on their exclusive right to be the sole representatives of Srila Prabhupada and trying to impose their views and interpretations on other devotees, even much more senior and experienced than they are. This is in fact a big problem, which, unless tackled, will continue to polarize ISKCON devotees, against the principle of "agree to disagree and carry on", which is the only practical solution for the age of quarrels and



hypocrisy.

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

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Fri, Jan 25, 2019

at 4:07 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Chris  
Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,  
Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Carl  
Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, David  
Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati  
devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,

Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti  
Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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On Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 7:14 PM Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

Krishna Kirti Prabhu,

I hit reply all but it's not showing anyone

else is receiving (on my phone now).. If this is the case, can you forward this email to our list?

Thank you

Mahatma das

Below is the email I am sending today.

I am in Hyderabad now and spent time speaking to a lifetime Sri Vaisnava from a family of many generations of Sri Vaisnavas. This devotee is quite familiar with their history.

I asked do you have female diksa gurus. She said yes.

I asked if there are different qualifications for males and female diksa gurus in the Sri Sampradaya. She said no.

I asked how the Gurus are approved. She said if someone is having sisyas they will interview the sisyas and if they are doing well the acharyas will ask the siksa guru to initiate.. This process is applicable for both men and women..

I would suggest taking what she says with a grain of salt. Also, no names or places we can check her testimony against.

Here is an interview we just conducted with Sri M.A. Lakshmi Thathachar, who is one of the senior-most and respected scholars in the Sri Vaisnava community today and authority in Pancharatra Shastra. His conclusion is that while FDGs are possible, it would have to be under the conditions of apatkala (emergency), and according to him the need for it in their sampradaya has never arisen.

Here is the interview: <https://youtu.be/pknpHOW6zZ4>

Here is some more information on Professor Thathachar: <https://venetiaansell.wordpress.com/2009/01/26/an-interview-with-professor-lakshmi-thathachar/>

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**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das

Fri, Jan 25,  
2019 at 4:44  
PM

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>  
Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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I was asked to upload the paper "5 Myths About the FDG Issue" to which GKP refers in his PRO VDG paper. Attached.

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**FDG\_5\_Myths\_Busted\_2019.01.21.**



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Fri, Jan 25, 2019

at 4:45 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa

Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti  
Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,  
Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita  
Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB  
Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti  
Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva  
Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,  
Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>,  
"Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles -  
USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>,  
Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>,  
Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>,  
"Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>,  
Pancaratra Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini



<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Mahatma Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 7:26 PM Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

Before I answer your questions, I am interested how you reconcile the many statements in which he differentiated women and vaisnavi's? In other words he was distinguishing his female disciples from the women he speaks about as having certain frailties. He made this point on various occasions.

In this regard, there are just a very few such statements. But they have been given such extraordinary emphasis by some that they might appear to be many.

Here are the sources of those statements [from an old essay of mine]:

The women's movement [in ISKCON] tried to explain that Vaisnavis were categorical exceptions to these kinds of statements, and writers of the women's movement produced references that supported this view. In reference to the statement "these girls are not ordinary girls, but are

as good as their brothers who are preaching Krishna consciousness,"{22} Radha devi dasi concluded that Srila Prabhupada made an "analytical exception" for "women engaged in transcendental activities".{23} In trying to explain that the "negative half of the woman picture" has been overemphasized and does not apply to Vaisnavis, Visakha devi dasi provided counterbalancing references: "Actually male and female bodies, these are just outward designations. Lord Caitanya said that whether one is brahmana or whatever he may be if he knows the science of Krishna then he is to be accepted as guru."{24} "Never trust the politician and woman. Of course, when woman comes to Krishna consciousness, that position is different. We are speaking of ordinary woman."{25} By arguing in this way, the women's movement strongly suggested that references to ordinary women (the negative references) do not apply to ISKCON's women.

{22} Srila Prabhupada. Caitanya-caritamrta Adi lila. 7.31 - 32 purport.

{23} Radha devi dasi "Participation, Protection and Patriarchy".

{24} Srila Prabhupada. Letter to Malati. December 25, 1974.

{25} Srila Prabhupada. Lecture. Bhagavad-gita 1.40. July 28, 1973.

And we can also add to this Mother Jyotirmayi's Women in ISKCON in Srila Prabhupada's Time as a source for such statements. Most of the quotes in her paper by the way are personal recollections from various devotees, some from Srila Prabhupada's letters, and hardly any are from his books. If you strip out all of the different devotees' personal recollections, you have very little material to go on.

But, quantity is not an issue. So, let's look at this statement:

"Never the trust the politician and woman. Of course, when woman comes to Krishna consciousness, that position is different. We are speaking of ordinary woman." That's from the above-mentioned lecture by Srila Prabhupada.

Consider this: what if you are a woman and only come 99% to Krishna consciousness? Does that mean you are 1% ordinary woman still? And if you are still 1% ordinary woman, does that mean concerns about ordinary women still apply to you?

What do you think?

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Fri, Jan 25, 2019

at 5:06 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa

Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,

Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Mahatma Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila

## Prabhupada.

On Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 7:39 PM Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

Before I answer the questions, I would like to ask one more question.. Do you have any evidence that women during the era of Suniti took diksa because prabhupada explains there was a time when women did not have gurus, but served their husbands and received the benefits of his service.

If she and other women at this time in history followed this tradition, of course no woman could initiate unless she somehow was allowed to take diksa for diksa definitely cannot be given unless one has diksa.

I asked this question before but didn't get a yes or no answer. This would require some historical evidence. According to what I have read from Prabhupada, traditionally women did not take diksa, did not attend gurukula, etc.

Does anyone have evidence that Suniti did transgress this system.. If not, this would be one of the reasons (I can think of others}

women like Suniti at that time couldnt initiate.

Pancaratrika system, like the Vaidika system, is eternal. And our system in particular is given by Sri Narada Muni. In fact, when Dhruva Maharaja was initiated by Narada Muni, it was not a Vaidika initiation. He did not receive upanayanam at the time or a sacred thread. And the mantra he received from Narada happens to be a panccharatrika mantra - om namo bhagavate vasudevaya.

As Narada Muni is the authority for this system, the question as to whether women could get initiated is settled by Narada Pancaratra. And as pointed out at length previously, from the Pancaratra, the answer is "yes", women can get initiated.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

p.s. I'm still interested in hearing your responses to the below questions from my side.

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**Krishna Kirti Das**

Fri, Jan 25, 2019

at 10:12 PM

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa

Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>,

Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita

Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB

Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti

Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva

Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,

Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>,

"Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles -

USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>,

Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>,

Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>,



"Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>,  
Pancaratra Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, 徐达斯

<siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Maharajas, Prabhus, and Matas, please  
accept my humble obeisances. All glories to  
Srila Prabhupada.

This is to announce our latest  
paper: Pāñcarātrika-vidhi and the Proposal  
of ISKCON's GBC for Instituting Female  
Dīkṣā-Gurus – A Critique.

One thing special about this is that we have  
translated extensive portions of Bharadvaja-  
samhita, which describe our process of  
initiations that our acharyas have given us.  
This is the first (and hence only) authorized  
presentation of our system of initiations in  
ISKCON because it is established with  
respect to shastra, sadhu and guru. We show  
how it is established with respect to all three

sources, not simply Srila Prabhupada's words alone.

Below is the executive summary, with clickable links to the specific page in the PDF document. These will open up to the relevant page of the PDF as hosted at <http://siddhanta.com>.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

Executive Summary

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The GBC subcommittee on Vaiṣṇavī Initiating Gurus was convened for the sake of creating recommendations for the implementation and practical functioning of female <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i>.</li> </ul>	ii
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questionable recommendation: female <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i> give first initiation only but males give second initiation to the first-initiated disciples of female <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i>.</li> </ul>	ii
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Also questionable: 55-year-old minimum age limit on female <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i>. <i>guru-sādhu-śāstra</i>.</li> </ul>	iii
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The subcommittee suggests that <i>daiva-varṇāśrama-dharmas</i> in some measure incompatible with spiritual advancement.</li> </ul>	iii
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose of this paper: to present the correct understanding about implementing</li> </ul>	iv

female <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i> according to <i>guru-sādhu-śāstra</i> and Vedic hermeneutics.	
Evidence from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura shows that first initiation as practiced in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISKCON includes the first three <i>saṁskāras</i> (<i>tāpa, puṇḍra, nāma</i>) from the procedure of <i>pañca-saṁskāra</i>, as described in <i>Nārada Pañcarātra</i>.</li> </ul>	2
Evidence from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura further shows that secondinitiation as practiced in ISKCON covers the last <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• two <i>saṁskāras</i> (<i>mantra, yāga</i>) from <i>pañca-saṁskāra</i>, where the disciplereceives <i>mantras</i> used in Deity worship.</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Harināma-dīkṣā</i> in ISKCON is a type of <i>pāñcarātrika</i> initiation, or <i>dīkṣā</i>.</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISKCON second initiation (<i>mantra-dīkṣā</i>) is also a type of <i>pāñcarātrika</i> initiation, or <i>dīkṣā</i>.</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therefore, <i>pāñcarātrikī</i> rules and regulations governing <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i> apply to female <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i>.</li> </ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms that <i>harināma-dīkṣā</i>is conducted according to <i>pāñcarātrika-vidhi</i>.</li> </ul>	3

<p>A synopsis of the <i>Nārada Pañcarātra</i>, <i>Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the <i>Parīṣiṣṭa</i> (appendix), establishes that ISKCON initiations are fully based on <i>pāñcarātrika-vidhi</i>.</li> </ul>	3
<p>According to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in <i>Harināma-cintāmaṇi</i>, the perfectional stage of <i>bhakti</i> begins at the level of <i>bhāva</i>.</li> </ul>	5
<p><i>Nārada Pañcarātra</i> allows women who are <i>siddha</i>, who are at the perfectional stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• of <i>bhakti</i> (<i>pratyakṣitātma-nātha</i>), who have completely spiritual bodies, to become <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i>.</li> </ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But women who are <i>not siddha</i> are prohibited from becoming <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i>.</li> </ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without any need for speculation, <i>Nārada Pañcarātra</i> fully harmonizes Śrīla Prabhupāda's differing statements on female <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i>.</li> </ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The system of initiations in ISKCON is 100% based on the <i>ācāryas</i> and <i>Nārada Pañcarātra</i>.</li> </ul>	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix I discusses two previous efforts sponsored by the GBC to research female <i>dīkṣā-gurus</i> and why neither effort produced conclusive results.</li> </ul>	10
<p>Appendix II provides <i>pramāṇas</i> showing that aguru qualified according</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to <i>pāñcarātrika-vidhi</i> can bestow the <i>brahma-gāyatrī</i> mantra with second initiation.</li> </ul>	12
<p>Appendix III provides the original transcript of SB 4.12.32, the purport where Śrīla</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prabhupāda says Sunīti could not be Dhruva's <i>dīkṣā-guru</i> because she was his mother and a woman.</li> </ul>	13
<p>Appendix IV gives the English translation of the first 56 <i>ślokas</i> of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the <i>Pariśiṣṭa</i> of <i>Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā</i> (<i>Nārada Pañcarātra</i>). <b>This has never been translated before into English.</b></li> </ul>	14

Also see the ISKCON page at [siddhanta.com](http://siddhanta.com)

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Sat, Jan 26,  
2019 at 8:14  
AM

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>,

Pancaratra Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Carl  
Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd

<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Pranam Maharajas and Prabhus unto your lotus feet,  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

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I asked do you have female diksa gurus. She said yes.

I asked if there are different qualifications for males and female diksa gurus in the Sri Sampradaya. She said no.

I asked how the Gurus are approved. She said if someone is having sisyas they will interview the sisyas and if they are doing well the acharyas will ask the siksa guru to initiate.. This process is applicable for both men and women..

Are there many women gurus? She said not so many because they are more inclined to put time into their families and not be public figures.



Did Ramanuja discourage women from giving diksa unless they were siddha? No, he never discouraged women from giving diksa until they were siddha. Same qualifications for both i. e. they are qualified by actually being a guru to their disciples..

Please ask her to give 5 names (or at least one name except Goddess Laksami) in Sri Vaisnava sampradaya. Let us get it attested by current acharyas and Sri Vaisnava scholars.

FYI, I have asked many Sri Vaisnava scholars this thing and they were, almost all, surprised first of all being asked such a stupid question. They could not imagine that such a question of vaisnavis becoming diksa-guru could even arise. They completely denied, and in some cases they said that even if siddha they cannot become diksa-guru unless there are extremely trying conditions of not having any qualified men to do the job.

Moreover there is one ISKCON devotee, Narayana Srinivasa Das, who is from the family of 74 madhulis that were established

by Ramanujacarya in order to perpetuate his sampradaya. If NSD would not have been in ISKCON today, he would have been one of the current gurus in Sri Sampradaya. When he heard about what Mahatma Prabhu's friend replied, he said it is competely bogus and that either she doesn't know anything or that she is misleading us. He said let her talk to him and he can prove that there has been no women diksa-guru in Sri Sampradaya.

I will revert back with more evidences from other scholars.

Our paper on Narada Pancaratra was researched discussing with some Sri Vaisnava scholars and Sridhara Srinivasa Prabhu (mentioned in the acknowledgement section) is by the way, a Sri Vaisnava from birth; his family strictly follows Sri Vaisnava siddhantas, and he has now accepted ISKCON. He has full grip over Sri Vaisnava Principles and he discussed our conclusions with some Sri Vaisnava scholars before our paper was published.

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**David Shapiro**

Sat, Jan 26,  
2019 at 8:48

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

AM

To: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB

Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,

"BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>,

Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl

Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,

Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva

Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,

Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>,

"Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>,

Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>,

Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa

Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>,

"Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma

Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma

Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna

Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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In courts of law, parolevidence is usually inadmissible. Anecdotal information, including that of Srila Prabhupada “said” or did, must be accepted only on verification of his writing, his recorded oral evidence, or his indisputable actions. I appreciate Damodara Pr ‘s challenges to what appears to be factual statements. We are all aware of “fake news” that permeates every aspect of our existence outside and inside of the Iskcon world. “Skepticism is the first step on the road to philosophy.” (Denis Diderot)

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**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

Sat, Jan 26, 2019 at 4:28 PM

To: nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
damodara.bvks@gmail.com  
Cc: ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
brss108@gmail.com,  
carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
krishnakirti@gmail.com,  
krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
pdb108@yahoo.com, suresvara@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
sati.bts@gmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com,  
vrnda16@icloud.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com

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Damodara Prabhu and others,

The Sri Vaisnava female guru plot thickens.

I'll see the Sri Vaisnavi tomorrow and find out more.

Her brother is in charge of the Ranganatha temple in Vrndavana, so I will see if we can talk to him as well and keep you all informed.

Your servant,  
Mahatma das

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**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 27,  
2019 at 7:30  
AM

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana  
Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,  
"BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS  
(Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>,  
Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti  
Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl  
Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>,  
Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva  
Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>,  
Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>,  
"Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles -  
USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>,  
Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>,

Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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Here is a new posting by Gaura Keshava pr further disputing the points made by Basu Ghosh pr. re Lakshmi Tatahar's position. It is reprinted by permission.

Basu Ghosh admits that we do not accept everything that Laksmi Tatachar believes. Yet he still considers him an authority on this particular subject i.e. FDGs.

Notice that he never asked him his opinion on foreign or sudra born male gurus.

WHY? Because Laksmi Tatachar doesn't accept them also. Neither does he even

think one can cross the ocean and retain his caste. There are any number of



caste-by-birth conscious persons who we can ask about these issues but none of them will admit women, sudra males or foreigners as gurus.

So in doing this Basu Ghosh falls prey to the ardha-kukuta nyaya the logic of half a chicken. He accepts Laksmi Tatachars opinions about women but not his opinions about foreigners or those not born in brahmin families. Half truth is no better than a lie. Srila Prabhupada his own gurus says women can be gurus but he would prefer to accept half the truth from a Ramanuja caste guru.

What Basu Ghosh fails to understand when he calls me a liberal is that Srila Prabhupada was also a liberal when it comes to these matters.

Once again I have no problem if Basu Ghosh wants to live according to the sastric directions of Dharma Sastras which call him an outcast being a foreigner and which deny sudra males, women and outcastes the possibility of being diksha gurus. But what I am against is cherry picking Dharma Sastras and suggesting that ONLY women be excluded from something that foreigners and males born sutras are also excluded from.

It is up to the ISKCON leadership to decide how much or how little the rules of Dharma Sastras i.e. Varnasharam social rules are to be follow or not within their institution. But what I object to is arbitrary enforcement of such medieval social standards on ONLY women and not men. That is hypocritical.

>> But the fact that female diksha guru is very rare -- if not  
>> non-existent -- we agree with.

We should note that being a Vaisnava or Vaisnavi itself is very rare, even exceptional in this world. Lord Krishna in the Gita says:

manusyanam sahasresu  
kascid yatati siddhaye  
yatatam api siddhanam  
kascin mam vetti tattvatah

Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.

Please note how exceptional it is for a person to know the science of Lord Krishna fully which is the definition of the qualification for being guru in Gaudiya tradition or sampradaya.

FDG is non-existent to my knowledge in Ramanuja Sampradaya (except for Laksmi devi herself), a community that up till now hasn't included many foreigners, unlike ISKCON. How then can that community's standards be compared to those of ISKCON that includes people from all over the world?

However it is there in Gaudiya Sampradaya tradition since the 16th century.

So why ask an ORTHODOX Ramanuja caste-guru his opinion about a standard for the Gaudiya Sampradaya?

Probably Basu Ghosh does this because he knows if he asked a Gaudiya they would cite the historical fact that it is accepted (albeit it is still rare and that is admitted) in Gaudiya Sampradaya. In fact his own guru Srila Prabhupada knew that and himself on two occasions spoke of Jahnava Thakurani as an example of FDGs in the Gaudiya Sampradaya. See below for Srila Prabhupada on Jahnava Thakurani FDG

Please note that even Laksmi Tatachar (I have not yet had a chance to fully respond to his video but I will) said:

1. If there is a need there can be FDGs. (Arguably there is a need in ISKCON. There are very very few gurus in ISKCON for the number of people that ISKCON is preaching to i.e. the whole world population. And according to ISKCON leadership there are apparently very few people who are qualified.)
2. If some lady is being automatically accepted and approached by many

people  
then it can happen naturally. Something which Prabhupada also stated, i.e. that  
gurus will be self effulgent. The fact is that there is at least one highly qualified ISKCON lady who has many people approaching her for diksha having  
preached and inspired faith in them for decades. Such an exceptional person whether male or female is qualified to be guru and not just siksha guru but diksha guru also according to Srila Prabhupada. Even Laksmi Tatachar seems to  
agree with this. See this point in the video.

>> "The history of vaishnavi diksha gurus in the Gaudiya sampradaya"

>> mostly consists of caste goswaminis.

So now we have to decide on what "tradition" means. Basu Ghosh wants to conserve a tradition. I also want to conserve a tradition. And I agree with Basu Ghosh that in the Gaudiya Math and ISKCON up till now the tradition is that women don't give diksha. In fact in 1978 ISKCON created the first foreign  
male diksha gurus. So ISKCON broke the sastric tradition by creating foreign male diksha gurus in 1978. Bhaktisiddhanta broke the sastric tradition in the 1900's by giving sacred threads to his disciples not born in brahmin families. Srila Prabhupada broke sastric tradition by giving his foreign male and women  
disciples the gayatri mantra in the 1960's. So apparently we are all liberals who are breaking sastric traditions from Bhaktisiddhanta, to Prabhupada to ISKCON leaders today, to Basu Ghosh and also myself. We are all liberals who  
are breaking some traditions of Dharma Sastras.

(Please also note that Laksmi Tatachar himself a Tengalai Ramanuja guru breaks  
Dharma Sastra traditions by giving initiation into a Vedic mantra to women and  
sudras which Vadakalai Ramanuja gurus never do. So Laksmi Tatachar himself is a  
liberal in this sense too. Arguably Ramanuja himself 1000 years ago also gave  
this Vedic mantra to all without considering the rules of Dharma Sastra that it cannot be given to women or sudras. So even 1000 years ago Ramanuja himself was  
a liberal. Persons who very strictly follow literally the Dharma Sastra in all the say are called Smartas or strict followers of the Smrtis. As you see above none of us from Laksmi Tatachar down to myself are Smartas in this sense.

Each of the persons mentioned above have broken some rules of Dharma Sastra to advance Vaisnavism. And thus they all can be called liberals.)

So the tradition Basu Ghosh wants to preserve is the Gaudiya Math tradition not to allow women to give diksha. By the way, no householders or foreigners in Gaudiya Math also give diksha. So ISKCON has already broken that Gaudiya Math tradition in 1978.

The tradition I want to preserve is the Gaudiya Sampradayas tradition of allowing for FDGs since the early 16th century (e.g. Jahnava Thakurani). I'm not suggesting all women be diksha gurus, neither am I in favor of all men being diksha gurus. Prabhupada gave the qualification Yei Krsna Tattva Vetta Sei Guru Hoy. Read my article 5 Myths about FDGs in ISKCON.

Not only that but there are several FDGs in Bhaktivinoda Thakurs guru parampara. Are they bogus? Are their mantras dead? Basu Ghosh and others of his camp have stated openly that they consider those FDGs mantras as dead, meaning that Bhaktivinodas diksha was bogus and his received mantra also dead. Ask him what he believes about this????? I strongly disagreed with this when it was openly stated in an email discussion many years ago. Basu Ghosh and his party want to gloss over these FACTS OF HISTORY. They want to dismiss all FDGs as bogus and their paramparas also as bogus. Similarly many in the Gaudiya Math and ISKCON want to reject the diksha of Bhaktivinoda by Bipina Bihari Goswami.

Thus for Basu Ghosh and his party the tradition or sampradaya they accept is ONLY as old as the Gaudiya Math. All Gaudiya Vaisnavas before that time who did not agree with his ideas now are not to be accepted. Thus he doesn't ask Gaudiya Vaisnavas their understanding, he instead asks a very orthodox Ramanuja Vaisnava who he knows will back his ideas on women. But this is hypocritical because he doesn't bother to ask that same Ramanuja Vaisnava his ideas on those born less than brahmin, and foreigners. He doesn't ask those questions because

he knows that the answers will be too sastric and too traditional even for him to accept. Thus Basu Ghosh and his party want to present a half-truth which is worse than a lie.

Laksmi Tatachar belongs to and wants to preserve the tradition that no women, persons born less than brahmin or foreigners can be diksha gurus. Not only that, but his idea is that ONLY the eldest son of one of the 74 seminal lineages coming from the persons chosen by Ramanuja can be diksha guru.

Which tradition do you think deserves to be preserved. We must define what we mean by tradition first before we decide.

Firstly philosophical definitions have to be agreed upon. Before which no fruitful discussion on this issue can be had.

Basu Ghosh says I want to change tradition, I say, he wants to change tradition, because we have different ideas of what tradition is.

So it is up to the ISKCON leadership to decide how much and how little Varnashrama social rules are to be adopted by the institution.

>> We -- specifically Srila Saraswati Thakur and his followers, i.e.

>> Srila Prabhupada and most of the Gaudiya Math diaspora -- don't

>> accept the caste goswami lines as bona fide.

Strawman argument! Prabhupada himself accepted Jahnava Thakurani as a bonafide diksha guru FDG. And Prabhupada himself stated that women can be diksha gurus.

Basu Ghosh has to go to Laksmi Tatachar or to Bharadvaja Samhita because he doesn't want to accept Prabhupada.

Yes, ISKCON follows some traditions of the Gaudiya Math and

Bhaktisiddhanta.

However ISKCON also breaks some Gaudiya Math traditions.

All gurus in Gaudiya Math are male sannyasis. Not only that but ONLY one sannyasi diksha guru is allowed in one institution i.e. math. How is that the same as the guru system in ISKCON?

In the same way that no Gaudiya Math accepts a diksha guru who is not a male sannyasi they also don't accept male householders or FDGs whereas in the larger Gaudiya Sampradaya these are both accepted since the early 16th century (the beginning of the Sampradayas history).

Sampradaya means tradition and the tradition for Gaudiyas starts with Lord Caitanya and directly following him there have been FDGs from the very beginning of the Gaudiya tradition. So why Basu Ghosh wants to deny his own tradition? Why he wants to deny his own gurus words and rely instead on the words of someone from another tradition?

>> Sometime ago (a couple of years, at least) I pointed this out to  
>> Bhanu Swami, who could not respond, when he cited the list of caste  
>> goswamini "diksha gurus", as some sort of pramana to support the  
>> idea of female diksha gurus, which Gaur Keshava Das seems to be  
>> referring to in his letter.

Strawman argument! Before the Gaudiya Math all Gaudiyas belonged to the different caste guru lineages. So to call gurus before the Gaudiya Math as caste gurus, and suggest that is a pejorative term is laughable. Just because a person is born in a family of gurus and become a guru himself or herself does not mean automatically they are bogus. The point is that a person must have the

qualifications for being guru i.e. that they fully know the science of Lord Krsna as Srila Prabhupada clearly stated. It doesn't matter whether they are born in any caste, gender, etc. if they fully know the science of Lord Krsna then Lord Caitanya (CC Mad 8.128) and Srila Prabhupada both say they are guru.

Basu Ghosh knows this sloka and Gaudiya definition of who is guru very well.

But like many caste goswamis today he says that anyone male or female who fully knows the science of Lord Krsna can be a siksha guru but not a diksha guru. This is exactly what caste goswamis believe.

That is not what Prabhupada clearly stated. It is not the understanding of CC Mad 8.128 that we accept. We accept that guru mentioned in CC Mad 8.128 means

anyone male or female, black or white, indian or foreign born, as long as they fully know the science of Lord Krsna can be both siksha and diksha guru.

Basu Ghosh's mentality is the same as the caste goswamis because he thinks CC

Mad 8.128 means that some persons who fully know the science of Lord Krsna are restricted from being diksha gurus.

>> The "exceptions" -- and I am not sure if they were diksha gurus or  
>> just shiksha gurus -- are Jahnava, and Gangamata Goswamini.

Basu Ghosh says he is not sure. Should he not be sure about his own tradition before criticizing it???

To be sure, all Basu Ghosh has to do is to accept his own guru Srila Prabhupada's words, but instead he feels the need to accept the opinion of a Ramanuja caste guru Laksmi Tatachar.

4. FOURTH MYTH: That Srila Prabhupada never acknowledged that FDGs may exist and have existed in the Gaudiya Sampradaya.



(Prabhupada: If a woman is perfect in Krsna consciousness... Just like Jahnava-devi, Lord Nityananda's wife, she was acarya. She was acarya...It is not that woman cannot be acarya. Generally, they do not become. In very special case. But Jahnava-devi was accepted as, but she did not declare.)

Room Conversation

—

June 29, 1972, San Diego

Prabhupada: So a crazy man's statement is not accepted. Child's statement, crazy man's statement, unauthorized person's statement, blind man's statement we cannot accept.

Atreya Rsi: A woman's statement?

Prabhupada: Huh?

Atreya Rsi: A woman's statement?

Prabhupada: If a woman is perfect in Krsna consciousness... Just like Jahnava-devi, Lord Nityananda's wife, she was acarya. She was acarya. She was controlling the whole Vaisnava community.

Atreya Rsi: Lord Nityananda?

Prabhupada: Wife. Jahnava-devi. She was controlling the whole Gaudiya Vaisnava community.

Atreya Rsi: Do you have references about that in any of your books, Srila Prabhupada?

Prabhupada: I don't think. But there are many acaryas. Maybe somewhere I might have mentioned. It is not that woman cannot be acarya. Generally, they do not become. In very special case. But Jahnava-devi was accepted as, but she

did not  
declare.

Srila Prabhupada clearly states "It is not that woman cannot be acarya."  
Opponents place emphasis on his statements "Generally, they do not  
become. In  
very special case."

Let us see what the "special case" means according to Srila Prabhupada. He  
explains it in the next quote:

(Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we  
keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the  
same...If she is able to go to the highest perfection of life, why it is not  
**possible to become guru? But, not so many.**  
**Actually one who has attained the**  
**perfection, she can become guru. But man**  
**or woman, unless one has attained the**  
**perfection... Yei krsna-tattva-vetta sei guru**  
**haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The**  
**qualification of guru is that he must be fully**  
**cognizant of the science of**  
**Krsna. Then he or she can become guru.**  
**Yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei guru haya.**  
[break] In our material world, is it any  
prohibition that woman cannot become  
**professor? If she is qualified, she can**  
**become professor. What is the wrong**  
**there? She must be qualified. That is the**  
**position. So similarly, if the woman**  
**understands Krsna consciousness perfectly,**  
**she can become guru.)**

Interview with Professors  
O'Connell, Motilal and Shivaram

—  
June 18, 1976, Toronto

Mrs. O'Connell: Swamiji, would you say something about the place of women in your movement?

Prabhupada: There is no distinction between man and woman. That is clearly said in the Bhagavad-gita. Mam hi partha vyapasritya ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah striyo sudras tatha vaisyah [Bg. 9.32]. The first is mentioned, striya. Striyah sudras tatha vaisyah. These classes are understood to be less intelligent—woman, sudra and the vaisyas. But Krsna says, "No, even for them it is open." Because in the spiritual platform there is no such distinction, man, woman, or black, white, or big or small. No. Everyone is spirit soul. Panditah sama-darsinah [Bg. 5.18]. Vidya-vinaya-sampanne brahmane gavi hastini suni caiva sva-pake ca panditah [Bg. 5.18]. One who is actually learned, he is sama-darsinah. He does not make any distinction. But so far our material body is concerned, there must be some distinction for keeping the society in order.

Mrs. O'Connell: The women could become panditas, then.

Prabhupada: Oh, yes. Te 'pi yanti param gatim. Not only come, she can also attain perfection. There is no such restriction. Krsna said.

Mrs. O'Connell: Do you have any panditas in the Western movement, women?

Prabhupada: There are so many Western woman, girls, in our society. They are chanting, dancing, taking to Krsna consciousness. Many. Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same.

**Prof. O'Connell: Is it possible, Swamiji, for a woman to be a guru in the line**

of disciplic succession?

Prabhupada: Yes. Jahnava devi was—  
Nityananda's wife. She became. If she is  
able

to go to the highest perfection of life, why it  
is not possible to become guru?

But, not so many. Actually one who has  
attained the perfection, she can become  
guru. But man or woman, unless one has  
attained the perfection... Yei  
krsna-tattva-vetta sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya  
8.128]. The qualification of guru  
is that he must be fully cognizant of the  
science of Krsna. Then he or she can  
become guru. Yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei  
guru haya. [break] In our material  
world, is it any prohibition that woman  
cannot become professor? If she is  
qualified, she can become professor. What is  
the wrong there? She must be  
qualified. That is the position. So similarly, if  
the woman understands Krsna  
consciousness perfectly, she can become  
guru.

Above Srila Prabhupada explains the  
"special case" for anyone man or woman to

become guru. He explains that if one has not attained perfection he or she may not be guru, and when he or she has attained perfection, defined as being "fully cognizant of the science of Krsna", then he or she can be guru.

Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru. But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection... Yei krsna-tattva-vetta sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Krsna. Then he or she can become guru. Yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei guru haya. [break]

>> Recently, I sent you "bcc" copies of letters I wrote to Madanmohan  
>> Das, a Russian devotee initiated by Mukunda Maharaj, and our  
>> godbrother Krishnadas Kaviraj from Toronto. Therein I state my  
>> thesis, part of my principled opposition to female diksha guru(s).

Writing something doesn't make it true or worthy of acceptance. Just because

you speak a lot or write a lot doesn't mean your utterances or writings have any value.

>> You would have seen the resolution passed by the ISKCON India

>> leadership during November 2010 -- I was co-author of that --

>> regarding female diksha gurus. Bhakti Rasamrita Swami edited what I

>> wrote (for the record).

Philosophical issues cannot be decided by vox populi either. You cannot vote away Srila Prabhupadas understanding of who can be guru, not even by presenting opinions by caste gurus of other sampradayas.

>> Gaur Keshava Das, bless his soul, belongs to the Western, liberal,

>> egalitarian, feminist camp.

Thanks I will accept your blessings.

Ad hominems aren't persuasive arguments.

I can say that Srila Prabhupada also

belonged to the liberal egalitarian camp too. See above my explanation of who is actually liberal and egalitarian. These qualities are not Western or Feminist. They are spiritual as stated in the Gita.

Lord Krsna in Gita 5.18 says:

vidya-vinaya-sampanne  
brahmane gavi hastini  
suni caiva sva-pake ca  
panditah sama-darsinah

The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste].

Our philosophy is that we see everyone spiritually equal. The qualification for being a guru either diksha or siksha is spiritual not material. See above Srila Prabhupadas explanation.

>> His opinions regarding female diksha  
>> guru have no basis in vedic shastras, nor in vedic culture and



>> tradition.

They certainly do have a basis in Gaudiya tradition since the early 16th century. And they are accepted by Srila Prabhupada who defines the qualification for being guru in terms of Lord Caitanyas order in CC Mad 8.128.

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya  
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya

“Whether one is a brahmana, a sannyasi or a sudra—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Krsna.”

>> As such, I reject his ideas completely.

>>

>> Gaur Keshava Das may know Prof. Thathachar longer than I. That

>> doesn't change anything here, nor does it change Prof. Thathachar's

>> views on female diksha gurus.

Nor does it change the fact that Laksmi Tatachar belongs to a different tradition and also does not accept foreigners,

sudras, women or any male eldest child born outside of 74 brahmin families as gurus.

Basu Ghosh's idea is that Laksmi Tatacharya's tradition is the same as his own tradition, he thinks Laksmi Tatacharya's opinion is more important than the teaching of his own guru, Srila Prabhupada.

I have no problem with accepting all of Laksmi Tatacharya's opinions for his particular branch of Ramanuja Sampradaya. But for ISKCON there is another standard, another tradition, another understanding given by Lord Caitanya and Srila Prabhupada.

dasan

GKD

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Mon, Jan 28, 2019 at 1:52 PM

**Sati devi dasi**

<sati.bts@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
<siddha\_007@163.com>, Visakha Dasi  
<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen  
<bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Dear SABHA members and guests of our conversation,  
please accept my humble obeisance  
All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

This is the second official reminder not to exclude Mother Visakha's email from this conversation.

Please kindly, before hitting the SEND button, make sure you have her email in. It takes 10 seconds and we would really appreciate your kind attention to this matter.

Please allow me to make one comment, if we miss such an important detail, there must be other important details we are missing.

Hope for your kind understanding,

best regards,  
ys Sati dd

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**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 30,  
2019 at 9:29  
AM

To: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>  
Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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My response to Gaur Keshava Das's letter of Jan 27.

Dear Maharajas, Prabhus, and Matajis,

Namonamaha. Jaya Srila Prabhupada!

Gaur Keshava Das has written to your group a refutation of what I have written to over the past few days to various devotees regarding the issue of female diksha gurus.

Here are point by point responses to some of what he wrote:

1. Gaur Keshava Das pointed out that I wrote that I may not accept everything that Prof. M.A. Lakshmi Thathachar believes. That is correct. But that I agree with Prof. Thathachar on the

invalidity of female diksha gurus. That is correct. He further wrote that Prof. Thathachar believes in brahmin by birth, and not brahmin by qualification (although he did not employ these words – but he would have us accept this by inference).

My contention here is that what ever other things Prof. Thathachar may believe are irrelevant to the topic of female diksha guru. Asking him about anything else – foreign gurus, shudra gurus, etc., isn't directly connected to the topic of female diksha gurus. It's an example of Gaur Keshava Das indulging in both wrangling and cavil, in order to distract the reader from the topic at hand: female diksha gurus.

Both Gaur Keshava Das and I accept Prof. Thathacar as a learned scholar in the tradition/sampradaya/parampara of Ramanujacharya.

Prof. Thathachar, Srila Prabhupada, and Srila B.R. Sridhar Maharaj – and many others, all agree that women diksha gurus are “not so many” (from Prabhupada's comments to Prof. O'Connell).

2. Gaur Keshava Das is of the opinion that the dharma shastras do not apply to us. The dharma shastras are around eighty in number, and the most prominent is the Manu Samhita/Manu Smriti.

Here is what Srila Prabhupada wrote about the Manu Samhita:

“As for behavior, there are many rules and regulations guiding human behavior, such as the *Manu-samhita*, which is the law of the human race.” (in his commentary on Bg 16.7)

Prabhupada: Whatever whimsically you make your law, that is law. Actually they are not fighting. Hindu law means Manu-samhita. So who is pressing them that “We don't require any law except this”? And where is that Hindu, strong Hindu? Hindu means Manu-samhita. (Prabhupada's morning walk at Nellore, January 8, 1976)

“So this statement will not be very palatable to the Western girls. They want independence. In Chicago, when I was there, they talked about independence of the woman. They asked me question. So I replied, “No, womans cannot be given independence.” So there was a great agitation against me. In many papers I was very much criticized. But actually it is the fact, because they are innocent, not so intelligent and... These are all practical. We may avoid discussing, but Bhagavata is very open for discussing all subject matter. That is fact. We should not hide anything artificially. We must discuss the fact. Not only here, the mention it is, the Manu-samhita. Manu-samhita



recommends, "A woman should not be given independence." For their interest they must be protected by father, husband and sons, because if they are polluted, they become very dangerous". (from Prabhupada's Bhagavatam class at Vrindavan (SB 5.6.4) on November 26, 1976)

This quote herein above has relevance to female diksha guru, as it deals with Srila Prabhupada's general outlook on women.

"So any slight deviation from the law, then we are put into undesirable condition. That is a fact. Just like here, according to Vedic principle, the laws are given by Manu. Manu. From Manu, the word manusya has come, or "man." And there is Manu-samhita. In the Manu-samhita it is stated that if a man commits murder, then he should be hanged. He should be hanged. That is followed by every human society. Why? But that means the sinful activities which he has enacted, if he is punished in this life, then he'll not so suffer against in the next life. His punishment will be finished. So that is a favor. If a murderer is hanged, then that is a favor shown by the government, because the next life you'll not have to suffer." (From Prabhupada's SB class, 6.1.6 on February 17, 1973, at Sydney).

From these quotes – and there are more – we should accept that Prabhupada taught that the dharma shastras, in particular Manu Samhita – are authorized.

Especially regarding women, Prabhupada commented with reference to the Manu Samhita. So, why should it be rejected as an authority just because Gaur Keshava Das feels so? The evidence shows he is wrong.

3. Gaur Keshava Das quotes a letter from Prabhupada, "'I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program.",

Gaur Keshava Das wants us to believe that this quote invalidates Prabhupada's purport to Srimad Bhagavatam 4.12.32, wherein Prabhupada wrote: "Although Narada Muni was his *diksa-guru* (initiating spiritual master), Suniti, his mother, was the first who gave him instruction on how to achieve the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is the duty of the *siksa-guru* or *diksa-guru* to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. According to sastric injunctions, there is no difference between *siksa-guru* and *diksa-guru*, and generally the *siksa-guru* later on becomes the *diksa-guru*. Suniti, however, being a woman, and

specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Maharaja's *diksa-guru*."

We should note:

a. Something written later – the purport to SB 4.12.32, supercedes that which was written earlier in the letter to Hansaduta dated January 3, 1969.

b. The historical record is that Prabhupada did NOT institute any disciples initiating, male or female by 1975. Thus the letter in question dated January 3, 1969 is to be taken as "general encouragement" to the devotees at the time, and not an eternal doctrine that somehow validates female diksha gurus. One letter of Prabhupada does not somehow institute something that he did not teach repeatedly.

c. The purport by Srila Prabhupada to SB 4.12.32 deals directly with the subject of women as diksha guru. There Prabhupada specifically forbids it, while stating women can be shiksha and padapradarshak guru. This is consistent with other statements by Prabhupada that there were women gurus and acharyas in the past, "but not so many".

4. Gaur Keshava Das writes: "Basu Ghosh's main argument is that there should not be free mixing of the sexes."

This statement is false. Part of Gaur Keshava Das's strategy of attack is to indulge in an exaggeration to attempt to shock the readers, and win their sympathy against "the bad guy, myself."

It is true that if women/females/vaishnavis were to serve as diksha gurus, as envisioned by the concept's proponents, these female gurus would begin a formal mentor relationship, coming into contact with a number of men, since the system being proposed to the GBC by the subcommittee does not explicitly forbid them from giving harinam/first initiation to men. Surely it is a part of, and not my "main" argument against women diksha gurus.

Just above where Gaur Keshava Das wrote about my "main argument", he quotes Prabhupada, apparently from a lecture or conversation – without a complete reference – trying to establish that Prabhupada did not so much care for the bodily distinction between man and woman.

Elsewhere he accused me of indulging in the half chicken logic, *ardha kukuti nyaya*.

But this is exactly what he has himself indulged in! Because the quote is only a part of what Prabhupada wrote about women.

This is the "other side" that Gaur Keshava Das neglects to note:

It appears from the verse that the inhabitants of Dvaraka were all owners of big palaces. This indicates the prosperity of the city. The ladies got up on the roofs just to have a look at the procession and the Lord. The ladies did not mix with the crowd on the street, and thus their respectability was perfectly observed. There was no artificial equality with the man. Female respectability is preserved more elegantly by keeping the woman separate from the man. The sexes should not mix unrestrictedly. (from Srila Prabhupada's purport to SB 1.11.24).

So, if there are two apparently contradictory statements from Srila Prabhupada, we have to consider the circumstances, and also the totality of Srila Prabhupada's outlook towards women.

It seems that Gaur Keshava Das took the quote about the "otherwise the rights are the same" from Prabhupada's discussion with Prof. O'Connell at Toronto. As I have written before, it can be understood that Srila Prabhupada, during his discussion with O'Connell was careful not to offend him.

At other times, Prabhupada was more direct:

Reporter: Are men superior in your movement, though?

Prabhupada: Hm?

Reporter: Are men regarded as superior to women?

Prabhupada: Yes, naturally. Naturally, woman requires protection by the man.

In the childhood she is protected by the father, and youth time she is

protected by the husband, and old age she is protected by elderly sons. That is natural.

Female Reporter: That goes against the thinking of a lot of people in

America now. Do you know that?

Prabhupada: No... America, maybe, but this is the natural position. Women require protection.

From Prabhupada's room conversation on March 5th, 1975 at New York City

In Prabhupada's purport to SB 1.11.24, he was being careful to establish a principle, and he used unabashed words "there was no artificial equality with the man", etc.

There are other such examples, but egalitarian thought will neither accept this example, nor any other of these clear

examples from Srila Prabhupada's teachings, since the aim of egalitarianism is to establish the equality of the sexes – and all humans - at all costs!

Prabhupada's letter to Naishkarmi dd, [written from Bhaktivedanta Manor on July, 28, 1973] is also an unabashed statement to her on how to live ideally as a woman:

In Vedic society no girl was allowed to remain independent and unmarried. Independence for women means they become like prostitutes, struggling to capture some man who will take care of her. In this way the so called independent woman has to work very hard to make herself attractive by artificially wearing cosmetics -- mini skirts and so many other things. Formerly the girl would be married to a suitable boy at a very early age, say six years old. But although a girl was married early she did not stay with her husband immediately, but was gradually trained in so many ways how to cook, clean and serve her husband in so many ways -- up until the time of her puberty. So all the time there was no anxiety because a girl would know -- I have got a husband, and the boy would know I have got this girl as my wife. Therefore when the boy and girl would come of age there was no chance of illicit sex-life. And the psychology is the first boy that a girl accepts in marriage, that girl will completely give her heart to, and this attachment on the girls side for her husband becomes more and more strong, thus if a girls gets a good husband -- one who has accepted a bona fide spiritual master and is firmly fixed up in his service, automatically the wife of such a good husband inherits all the benefits of his spiritual advancement. So you are fortunate. Go on in this present attitude, serve your husband always and in this way your life will be perfect, and together husband and wife go back home -- Back to Godhead."

This is another example of Prabhupada's principled opposition to the free mixing of the sexes, but it is NOT my "main point". This is also one of the many examples of how Prabhupada viewed the ideal duty of a woman, as a grihini, housewife, serving her husband and family.

My main point is that diksha guru is NOT the duty of a woman according to vedic/shastric thought, and according to the varnashram system as given by Lord Krishna Himself.

6. Gaur Keshava Das wrote: "The kind of society that Suniti and Dhruva lived in Yugas ago was such a strict Smarta Varnashrama society. Therefore it is not unreasonable to state that Suniti could not become a diksha guru."

Hmm. Why didn't Srila Prabhupada make such a comment in his

purport? This is Gaur Keshava Das's interpretation, meant to deny the validity of Srila Prabhupada's comments.

Srila Prabhupada wrote his purports to guide humanity in the present time. If he felt that Suniti ought not to have been a diksha guru because she was in Satya yuga, and not Kali yuga, he would have commented as such! He did not, so why should we not take what Prabhupada wrote as his instructions for humanity at the present time?

The fact is that Gaur Keshava Das wishes to distort the facts by twisting the meaning of what Prabhupada clearly wrote to promote his concocted idea of how society should function and what the role of women in society should be! His concocted idea adheres to the Western, liberal, leftist, feminist, egalitarian outlook, so popular at the present time.

7. Gaur Keshava Das wrote: "Basu Ghosh wants to interpret this famous verse of CC in the following way:"

No, this is not true. The "kipa vipra, kiba nyasi.... sei guru haya" verse upholds the truth that I have already accepted herein before: that women can be guru: padapradarshaka or shiksha, but not diksha guru. Again, another example of Gaur Keshava Das misguiding his readers.

8. Gaur Keshava Das wrote: "Now when faced with this explanation persons like Basu Ghosh admit this. They admit that even a woman who is KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA can be a diksha guru."

Not true. While there are some in the anti-FDG "camp" that may admit this, I am not one of them. As for myself, I go by what Srila Prabhupada wrote in the purport to SB 4.12.32, that "Suniti being a woman... could not be Dhruva Maharaj's diksha guru".

Wherever Prabhupada has mentioned Jahnava as a guru and acharya, he never mentions "diksha", specifically.

Even the present proposal before the GBC seems to clearly acknowledge this and therefore wishes to distinguish between harinam and diksha. As Krishnadas Kaviraj Prabhu wrote: "it is not diksha, it is just harinam, as it is known in the Gaudiya Math" (paraphrase).

My contention is that harinam is diksha! It must be admitted to be a part of diksha. As the analogy goes: it is not that a woman can be "partially pregnant": she is either pregnant or not pregnant!

When we establish women as formal diksha gurus, a system that has not been part of the vedic tradition will begin, and it will not be easily possible to stop. We will be accused of introducing a new invention by vaishnavas both within the Gaudiya Math, Gaudiya sampradaya, and the other three vaishnava sampradayas.

We will also be guilty of negating varnashram dharma, by introducing women diksha gurus, because giving diksha is part of the duty of the brahmanas.

Gaur Keshava Das argues that since many of us are not brahmanas by birth, as so, well, that is a point in favor of introducing women diksha gurus.

But the fact is that we know that Prabhupada and shastra teach varnashram dharma. There is the famous statement of Prabhupada that "fifty percent of my work is unfinished, because establishing varnashram is fifty percent that remains" (paraphrase – it is a well known statement of his).

Arguing that varnashram dharma was for a bygone age is in contradiction to what Prabhupada taught. As is saying that varnashram dharma is only for smarta brahmanas. If it was, Prabhupada and Srila Saraswati Thakur would not have advocated it's revival, time and again!

The condemnation (and it is not the "eternal damnation of Christianity) of Smarta brahmanas is that:

- a. They (a major portion of them) follow the Advaita Vedanta siddhanta of Adi Shankara
- b. They worship demigods (devatas), mainly the "panchopaasana" recommended by Adi Shankara

It is not that Gaur Keshava Das can just accuse us of adhering to Smarta principles because we espouse varnashram dharma. His doing so is in fact an offense at the feet of Prabhupada and Srila Saraswati Thakur.

9. Gaur Keshava Das wrote: "But mark my words if all these regressive social programs are put into action even in ISKCON India alone, eventually the male Indian members of ISKCON will turn their attention to those male NON-Indian born members of ISKCON and suggest that it would be better for those born in dvija families to perform all these spiritual duties."

So Gaur Keshava Das feels that he can win the argument for women diksha gurus by painting a "doomsday scenario", and categorizing us, specifically myself, as "smartas".



So he does not, by his words, give credit to Srila Prabhupada, who himself was an Indian, for his espousal of "varnashram does not depend on birth alone". Prabhupada felt that it was "shastra sammata" – in adherence to shastras – to give brahminial initiation – specifically the sacred thread, and sannyas initiation to men not born in one of the three upper castes, the brahmanas, kshatriyas, and vaishyas.

However, Prabhupada did NOT offer the sacred thread for women. He made the distinction.

Gaur Keshava Das wants us to give up making distinction between "spiritual men and women".

This is in fact egalitarianism in action. By employing pejorative terminology to give the opposition to his own heterodox views a bad name, he feels he can win the argument. But the argument should be won by adhering to the body of the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, vedic shastras, and vedic tradition.

That he has not been able to do, because his views contradict what Srila Prabhupada clearly taught.

10. Gaur Keshava Das accuses us of "skin disease". Again, here he indulges in untruth in order to paint those who oppose female diksha gurus as evil and offenders of the Gaudiya siddhanta. It is just plain dishonest and unfair of him to do so. It does not show him in a good light.

11. Gaura Keshava Das wrote: "Those who want to accept women according to their actual qualifications and abilities are described by Basu Ghosh as western liberal egalitarian feminists. I disagree. Acceptance of FDGs is a Gaudiya tradition since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century (albeit in less number than male brahmins of course). THAT IS A HISTORICAL FACT."

Just writing that something is a "historical fact" does not in and of itself make it one! He has not provided the evidence, and we know that Prabhupada referred to only two or three women as "gurus and acharyas". He did not refer to them as diksha gurus.

Our line is a "Bhagavat line" and not a diksha line. There are "time gaps" in the line that Prabhupada refers to in his introduction to the Bhagavad-gita where he mentions the gurus in our guru parampara.

The very same Prabhupada outlined the system of initiation, pancharatrika vidhi, in detail in his purport in Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 15.108. He and Srila Saraswati Thakur followed – and thus taught by their example, this system.



To allege that we somehow are opposed to this system is another dishonest attempt to blacken our names with a view to win an argument.

Debate is not won by indulging in making false claims against one's ideological opponents, but by establishing the truth with reference to proper evidence. In our case that is guru, sadhu, and shastra.

This Gaur Keshava Das has been unable to do, because he is proposing a doctrine that just does not exist in vedic shastra, nor is it extent in vaishnava society – in any of the four sampradayas.

12. Gaur Keshava Das wrote:

“Basu Ghosh and party want everyone to believe that the position of diksha guru is not a purely spiritual position but it is a position that requires social and material qualifications like being born male. We totally reject this sexist definition of the qualifications of diksha guru which is based solely on bodily consciousness. Basu Ghosh wants us to believe that we are all equal spiritually, but males are more equal spiritually than females. LOL!”

What does it mean by “purely spiritual position”?

We are all in this material world, born into human bodies, that encase inside of each body a jivatma. Baddha jivas – entangled in the material body, covered by the five gross, and three subtle elements, and under the influence of the three qualities – gunas.

What then does he mean by “spiritual”?

It is Bhagavad-gita – the words of Lord Krishna – where distinction - the caste system aka varnashram dharma, is taught. So the Bhagavad-gita is then not “spiritual”?

“Sexist”. It's a “buzz word” for egalitarians to propagate apasiddhanta and attempt to win an argument by blackening the opposition.

All followers of the Bhagavad-gita recognize that all living entities are equal as jivas, not just human beings, but the animals, birds, reptiles, insects, etc. All are baddha jivas. As per Gita 5.18.

But the same Bhagavad-gita teaches that there are distinctions, as per 9.34, where women and shudras are categorized by LORD

KRISHNA HIMSELF, as being born in sinful wombs – papayonayaha. We admit that we have taken such a lower birth.

To adhere to the bodily distinctions may be “sexist” as Gaur Keshava Das rants, but it is also adherent to the teachings of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita! So we will adhere to those teachings, and he can condemn them and proclaim himself a true follower, but the fact is that he is indeed under the mistaken influence of Western egalitarian thought by his attempt to paint those who do accept the teachings of Bhagavad-gita as somehow misguided!

Prabhupada in so many of his purports made distinction between men and women, and I dare state the obvious: so did Mahaprabhu!

As a member of the sannyas ashram, he avoided the company of women almost totally! Was He thus “sexist”? Was Srila Prabhupada “sexist”?

Srila Saraswati Thakur propagated the revival of the varnashram system, and the sannyas ashram, which was not followed by Gaudiya Vaishnavas after Mahaprabhu. Therefore, his followers are sometimes known as Saraswats. Varnashram dharma means making bodily distinction. Not that because our innate identity is eternal spirit – satchidananda - jivatma, that we can or should reject varnashram dharma.

Here is where the logic of Gaur Keshava Das is heterodox. He wants us all to believe that adherence to varnashram dharma is “smarta”. In one fell swoop he negates all that Prabhupada, and indeed Lord Krishna taught about varnashram dharma!

Srimad Bhagavatam describes varnashram dharma in numerous places. The first canto, seventh canto, and eleventh canto give detailed instructions about varnashram dharma.

Is the Bhagavatam somehow “smarta”? But by the logic put forward in the letter of Gaur Keshava Das, he would have us believe that it is!

In conclusion, although I wish Gaur Keshava Das well, I cannot accept the heterodox theories that he wishes us to accept. They contradict what guru, sadhu, and shastra teach, as pointed out herein above.

Hare Krishna!

dasanudas,

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**Rukmini Walker**

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 30,  
2019 at 9:40  
AM

To: David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com> ,

Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com> ,

Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net> , BB

Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com> ,

"BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS  
(Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net> ,

Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com> , Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com> , Bob

Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu> , Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com> , Chris

Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com> ,

Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com> , Dhruva Kusa

Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com> , Divya

Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com> , "Drutakarma

(das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)"

<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti  
Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa  
Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,  
Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>,  
"Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma  
Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma  
Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna  
Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>,  
"Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi  
<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯  
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Ys,

r

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 30,  
2019 at 4:45  
PM

To: Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana

Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>,

"BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS

(Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>,

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<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob

Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris

Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his

## faithful followers.

Some time ago a question was raised on this email thread that there are senior vaisnavis who are preaching for many years and have many fixed up devotees taking guidance and instructions from them. What is the reason they cannot become diksa-guru for their followers; their followers are asking them that they become their diksa-guru.

While reading the SB 4.12.32 purport once again, it clicked to my mind that this could be the answer Srila Prabhupada himself gives:

*It is the duty of the śikṣā-guru or dīkṣā-guru to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. According to śāstric injunctions, there is no difference between śikṣā-guru and dīkṣā-guru, and generally the śikṣā-guru later on becomes the dīkṣā-guru. Sunīti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Mahārāja's dīkṣā-guru.*

Srila Prabhupada says " generally the śikṣā-guru later on becomes the dīkṣā-guru. " This is what we are also anticipating in our question above. Generally we see that one who preaches and takes through their followers, they initiate them and become their diksa-guru (if thier own guru is not present).



However, Srila Prabhupada adds Suniti being woman and his mother could not become Dhruva Maharaja's diksa-guru.

I think this would apply in case of women who are preaching and having followers; for them although generally men would have become diksa-guru, women could not, reason being woman.

Just a thought, not conclusion. What do you think?

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

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**Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion**

[Inbox](#)



Thu, Jan 31, 2019 at 4:39 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

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Prabhu

If you want my opinion, here it is (and I am definitely not alone in thinking this way).

If women in Satyayuga could not be gurus because they were women, fine. But many of us have a problem when discussing issues that reflect social realities of a much different time and applying those same standards to Mahaprabhu's movement, a movement that doesn't reflect those same standards. So my opinion is that Prabhuapda is referring to Suniti, within the context she lived, not within the context of Mahaprabhu's movement. Of course, this purport is an important element in your argument for not allowing non perfected women to initiate. But if this is true, Prabhupada could have added that "Suniti, as a woman who had not attained bhava, could not initiate." My research has confirmed that in those times it was socially unacceptable for women to have any male roles.

Krishna Kirti opined that because Dhruva received a pancaratratriki mantra it meant that women could initiate because even those they could give vedic mantras they could give pancaratratriki mantras. But again, I am not aware of any

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incidents where this was socially acceptable. And if I am correct, then Suniti, being a women and not be able to initiate, is a contextual statement that we cannot apply equally in Mahaprabhu's movement. Of course, your argument is that being a women means only a women who is not at the stage of bhava. Many of us feel that relying on one statement of Bharadwaj muni in light of the many statements in which Prabhupada qualifies guru as one who knows the science of Krsna (and he never mentions sex), is minimizing Prabhupada's position on this issue, not clarifying it.

Of course, I don't expect that you will agree with my logic, but at least you can see that what seems obvious to you and those other devotees that propose that women should not be diksa gurus unless they are the stage of bhava, is not understood this way by many others. For us, we see that this idea effectively eliminates women from ever becoming gurus, for the chances of females seeing Krsna in this life are rare, and perhaps equally if not more rare will be the men who are meant to determine the validity of this statement accepting it to be true, especially if they are on a lower stage of bhakti.

On Wed, Jan 30, 2019 at 4:45 PM Damodara Dasa  
<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)> wrote:

Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Some time ago a question was raised on this email thread that there are senior vaisnavis who are preaching for many years and have many fixed up devotees taking guidance and instructions from them. What is the reason they cannot become diksa-guru for their followers; their followers are asking them that they become their diksa-guru.

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While reading the SB 4.12.32 purport once again, it clicked to my mind that this could be the answer Srila Prabhupada himself gives:

It is the duty of the *śikṣā-guru* or *dīkṣā-guru* to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. According to śāstric injunctions, there is no difference between *śikṣā-guru* and *dīkṣā-guru*, and generally the *śikṣā-guru* later on becomes the *dīkṣā-guru*. Sunīti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Mahārāja's *dīkṣā-guru*.

Srila Prabhupada says "generally the *śikṣā-guru* later on becomes the *dīkṣā-guru*." This is what we are also anticipating in our question above. Generally we see that one who preaches and takes through their followers, they initiate them and become their diksa-guru (if thier own guru is not present).

However, Srila Prabhupada adds Suniti being woman and his mother could not become Dhruva Maharaja's diksa-guru.

I think this would apply in case of women who are preaching and having followers; for them although generally men would have become diksa-guru, women could not, reason being woman.

Just a thought, not conclusion. What do you think?

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

On Wed, Jan 30, 2019 at 9:40 AM Rukmini Walker  
<[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)> wrote:

## Can you please send Gaura Kesava Pr's letter to us here? Why aren't we all able to read it?

Ys,  
r

On Wed, 30 Jan 2019 at 09:29, David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

My response to Gaur Keshava Das's letter of Jan 27.

Dear Maharajas, Prabhus, and Matajis,

Namonamaha. Jaya Srila Prabhupada!

Gaur Keshava Das has written to your group a refutation of what I have written to over the past few days to various devotees regarding the issue of female diksha gurus.

Here are point by point responses to some of what he wrote:

1. Gaur Keshava Das pointed out that I wrote that I may not accept everything that Prof. M.A. Lakshmi Thathachar believes. That is correct. But that I agree with Prof. Thathachar on the invalidity of female diksha gurus. That is correct. He further wrote that Prof. Thathachar believes in brahmin by birth, and not brahmin by qualification (although he did not employ these words – but he would have us accept this by inference).

My contention here is that what ever other things Prof. Thathachar may believe are irrelevant to the topic of female diksha guru. Asking him about anything else – foreign gurus, shudra gurus, etc., isn't directly connected to the topic of female diksha gurus. It's an example of Gaur Keshava Das indulging in both wrangling and cavil, in order to distract the reader from the topic at hand: female diksha gurus.

Both Gaur Keshava Das and I accept Prof. Thathacar as a learned scholar in the tradition/sampradaya/parampara of Ramanujacharya.

Prof. Thathachar, Srila Prabhupada, and Srila B.R. Sridhar Maharaj – and many others, all agree that women diksha gurus are "not so many" (from Prabhupada's comments to Prof. O'Connell).

2. Gaur Keshava Das is of the opinion that the dharma shastras do not apply to us. The dharma shastras are around eighty in number, and the most prominent is the Manu Samhita/Manu Smriti.

Here is what Srila Prabhupada wrote about the Manu Samhita:

"As for behavior, there are many rules and regulations guiding human behavior, such as the *Manu-samhita*, which is the law of the human race." (in his commentary on Bg 16.7)

Prabhupada: Whatever whimsically you make your law, that is law. Actually they are not fighting. Hindu law means Manu-samhita. So who is pressing them that "We don't require any law except this"? And where is that Hindu, strong Hindu? Hindu means Manu-samhita. (Prabhupada's morning walk at Nellore, January 8, 1976)

"So this statement will not be very palatable to the Western girls. They want independence. In Chicago, when I was there, they talked about independence of the woman. They asked me question. So I replied, "No, womans cannot be given

independence." So there was a great agitation against me. In many papers I was very much criticized. But actually it is the fact, because they are innocent, not so intelligent and... These are all practical. We may avoid discussing, but Bhagavata is very open for discussing all subject matter. That is fact. We should not hide anything artificially. We must discuss the fact. Not only here, the mention it is, the Manu-samhita. Manu-samhita recommends, "A woman should not be given independence." For their interest they must be protected by father, husband and sons, because if they are polluted, they become very dangerous". (from Prabhupada's Bhagavatam class at Vrindavan (SB 5.6.4) on November 26, 1976)

This quote herein above has relevance to female diksha guru, as it deals with Srila Prabhupada's general outlook on women.

"So any slight deviation from the law, then we are put into undesirable condition. That is a fact. Just like here, according to Vedic principle, the laws are given by Manu. Manu. From Manu, the word manusya has come, or "man." And there is Manu-samhita. In the Manu-samhita it is stated that if a man commits murder, then he should be hanged. He should be hanged. That is followed by every human society. Why? But that means the sinful activities which he has enacted, if he is punished in this life, then he'll not so suffer against in the next life. His punishment will be finished. So that is a favor. If a murderer is hanged, then that is a favor shown by the government, because the next life you'll not have to suffer." (From Prabhupada's SB class, 6.1.6 on February 17, 1973, at Sydney).

From these quotes – and there are more – we should accept that Prabhupada taught that the dharma shastras, in particular Manu Samhita – are authorized.

Especially regarding women, Prabhupada commented with reference to the Manu Samhita. So, why should it be rejected as an authority just because Gaur Keshava Das feels so? The evidence shows he is wrong.

3. Gaur Keshava Das quotes a letter from Prabhupada, "'I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program.",

Gaur Keshava Das wants us to believe that this quote invalidates Prabhupada's purport to Srimad Bhagavatam 4.12.32, wherein Prabhupada wrote: "Although Narada Muni was his *diksa-guru* (initiating spiritual master), Suniti, his mother, was the first who gave him instruction on how to achieve the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is the duty of the *siksa-guru* or *diksa-guru* to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. According to sastric injunctions, there is no difference between *siksa-guru* and *diksa-guru*, and generally the *siksa-guru* later on becomes the *diksa-guru*. Suniti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Maharaja's *diksa-guru*."

We should note:

- a. Something written later – the purport to SB 4.12.32, supercedes that which was written earlier in the letter to Hansaduta dated January 3, 1969.
- b. The historical record is that Prabhupada did NOT institute any disciples initiating, male or female by 1975. Thus the letter in question dated January 3, 1969 is to be taken as "general encouragement" to the devotees at the time, and not an eternal doctrine that somehow validates female diksha gurus. One letter of Prabhupada does not somehow institute something that he did not teach repeatedly.
- c. The purport by Srila Prabhupada to SB 4.12.32 deals directly with the subject of women as diksha guru. There Prabhupada specifically forbids it, while stating women can be shiksha and padapradarshak guru. This is consistent with other statements by Prabhupada that there were women gurus and acharyas in the past,



“but not so many”.

4. Gaur Keshava Das writes: “Basu Ghoshs main argument is that there should not be free mixing of the sexes.”

This statement is false. Part of Gaur Keshava Das’s strategy of attack is to indulge in an exaggeration to attempt to shock the readers, and win their sympathy against “the bad guy, myself.

It is true that if women/females/vaishnavis were to serve as diksha gurus, as envisioned by the concept’s proponents, these female gurus would begin a formal mentor relationship, coming into contact with a number of men, since the system being proposed to the GBC by the subcommittee does not explicitly forbid them from giving harinam/first initiation to men. Surely it is a part of, and not my “main” argument against women diksha gurus.

Just above where Gaur Keshava Das wrote about my “main argument”, he quotes Prabhupada, apparently from a lecture or conversation – without a complete reference – trying to establish that Prabhupada did not so much care for the bodily distinction between man and woman.

Elsewhere he accused me of indulging in the half chicken logic, ardha kukuti nyaya.

But this is exactly what he has himself indulged it! Because the quote is only a part of what Prabhupada wrote about women.

This is the “other side” that Gaur Keshava Das neglects to note:

It appears from the verse that the inhabitants of Dvaraka were all owners of big palaces. This indicates the prosperity of the city. The ladies got up on the roofs just to have a look at the procession and the Lord. The ladies did not mix with the crowd on the street, and thus their respectability was perfectly observed. There was no artificial equality with the man. Female respectability is preserved more elegantly by keeping the woman separate from the man. The sexes should not mix unrestrictedly. (from Srila Prabhupada’s purport to SB 1.11.24).

So, if there are two apparently contradictory statements from Srila Prabhupada, we have to consider the circumstances, and also the totality of Srila Prabhupada’s outlook towards women.

It seems that Gaur Keshava Das took the quote about the “otherwise the rights are the same” from Prabhupada’s discussion with Prof. O’Connell at Toronto. As I have written before, it can be understood that Srila Prabhupada, during his discussion with O’Connell was careful not to offend him.

At other times, Prabhupada was more direct:

Reporter: Are men superior in your movement, though?

Prabhupada: Hm?

Reporter: Are men regarded as superior to women?

Prabhupada: Yes, naturally. Naturally, woman requires protection by the man. In the childhood she is protected by the father, and youth time she is protected by the husband, and old age she is protected by elderly sons. That is natural.

Female Reporter: That goes against the thinking of a lot of people in America now. Do you know that?

Prabhupada: No... America, maybe, but this is the natural position. Women require protection.

From Prabhupada’s room conversation on March 5th, 1975 at New York City

In Prabhupada’s purport to SB 1.11.24, he was being careful to establish a principle, and he used unabashed words “there was no artificial equality with the man”, etc.

There are other such examples, but egalitarian thought will neither accept this

example, nor any other of these clear examples from Srila Prabhupada's teachings, since the aim of egalitarianism is to establish the equality of the sexes – and all humans - at all costs!

Prabhupada's letter to Naishkarmi dd, [written from Bhaktivedanta Manor on July, 28, 1973] is also an unabashed statement to her on how to live ideally as a woman:

In Vedic society no girl was allowed to remain independent and unmarried. Independence for women means they become like prostitutes, struggling to capture some man who will take care of her. In this way the so called independent woman has to work very hard to make herself attractive by artificially wearing cosmetics -- mini skirts and so many other things. Formerly the girl would be married to a suitable boy at a very early age, say six years old. But although a girl was married early she did not stay with her husband immediately, but was gradually trained in so many ways how to cook, clean and serve her husband in so many ways -- up until the time of her puberty. So all the time there was no anxiety because a girl would know -- I have got a husband, and the boy would know I have got this girl as my wife. Therefore when the boy and girl would come of age there was no chance of illicit sex-life. And the psychology is the first boy that a girl accepts in marriage, that girl will completely give her heart to, and this attachment on the girls side for her husband becomes more and more strong, thus if a girls gets a good husband -- one who has accepted a bona fide spiritual master and is firmly fixed up in his service, automatically the wife of such a good husband inherits all the benefits of his spiritual advancement. So you are fortunate. Go on in this present attitude, serve your husband always and in this way your life will be perfect, and together husband and wife go back home -- Back to Godhead."

This is another example of Prabhupada's principled opposition to the free mixing of the sexes, but it is NOT my "main point". This is also one of the many examples of how Prabhupada viewed the ideal duty of a woman, as a grihini, housewife, serving her husband and family.

My main point is that diksha guru is NOT the duty of a woman according to vedic/shastric thought, and according to the varnashram system as given by Lord Krishna Himself.

6. Gaur Keshava Das wrote: "The kind of society that Suniti and Dhruva lived in Yugas ago was such a strict Smarta Varnashrama society. Therefore it is not unreasonable to state that Suniti could not become a diksha guru."

Hmm. Why didn't Srila Prabhupada make such a comment in his purport? This is Gaur Keshava Das's interpretation, meant to deny the validity of Srila Prabhupada's comments.

Srila Prabhupada wrote his purports to guide humanity in the present time. If he felt that Suniti ought not to have been a diksha guru because she was in Satya yuga, and not Kali yuga, he would have commented as such! He did not, so why should we not take what Prabhupada wrote as his instructions for humanity at the present time?

The fact is that Gaur Keshava Das wishes to distort the facts by twisting the meaning of what Prabhupada clearly wrote to promote his concocted idea of how society should function and what the role of women in society should be! His concocted idea adheres to the Western, liberal, leftist, feminist, egalitarian outlook, so popular at the present time.

7. Gaur Keshava Das wrote: "Basu Ghosh wants to interpret this famous verse of CC in the following way:"

No, this is not true. The "kipa vipra, kiba nyasi... sei guru haya" verse upholds the truth that I have already accepted herein before: that women can be guru: padapradarshaka or shiksha, but not diksha guru. Again, another example of Gaur Keshava Das misguiding his readers.

8. Gaur Keshava Das wrote: "Now when faced with this explanation persons like Basu Ghosh admit this. They admit that even a woman who is KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA can be a diksha guru."

Not true. While there are some in the anti-FDG "camp" that may admit this, I am not one of them. As for myself, I go by what Srila Prabhupada wrote in the purport to SB 4.12.32, that "Suniti being a woman... could not be Dhruva Maharaj's diksha guru".

Wherever Prabhupada has mentioned Jahnava as a guru and acharya, he never mentions "diksha", specifically.

Even the present proposal before the GBC seems to clearly acknowledge this and therefore wishes to distinguish between harinam and diksha. As Krishnadas Kaviraj Prabhu wrote: "it is not diksha, it is just harinam, as it is known in the Gaudiya Math" (paraphrase).

My contention is that harinam is diksha! It must be admitted to be a part of diksha. As the analogy goes: it is not that a woman can be "partially pregnant": she is either pregnant or not pregnant!

When we establish women as formal diksha gurus, a system that has not been part of the vedic tradition will begin, and it will not be easily possible to stop. We will be accused of introducing a new invention by vaishnavas both within the Gaudiya Math, Gaudiya sampradaya, and the other three vaishnava sampradayas.

We will also be guilty of negating varnashram dharma, by introducing women diksha gurus, because giving diksha is part of the duty of the brahmanas.

Gaur Keshava Das argues that since many of us are not brahmanas by birth, as so, well, that is a point in favor of introducing women diksha gurus.

But the fact is that we know that Prabhupada and shastra teach varnashram dharma. There is the famous statement of Prabhupada that "fifty percent of my work is unfinished, because establishing varnashram is fifty percent that remains" (paraphrase – it is a well known statement of his).

Arguing that varnashram dharma was for a bygone age is in contradiction to what Prabhupada taught. As is saying that varnashram dharma is only for smarta brahmanas. If it was, Prabhupada and Srila Saraswati Thakur would not have advocated it's revival, time and again!

The condemnation (and it is not the "eternal damnation of Christianity) of Smarta brahmanas is that:

- a. They (a major portion of them) follow the Advaita Vedanta siddhanta of Adi Shankara
- b. They worship demigods (devatas), mainly the "panchopaasana" recommended by Adi Shankara

It is not that Gaur Keshava Das can just accuse us of adhering to Smarta principles because we espouse varnashram dharma. His doing so is in fact an offense at the feet of Prabhupada and Srila Saraswati Thakur.

9. Gaur Keshava Das wrote: "But mark my words if all these regressive social programs are put into action even in ISKCON India alone, eventually the male Indian members of ISKCON will turn their attention to those male NON-Indian born members of ISKCON and suggest that it would be better for those born in dvija families to perform all these spiritual duties."

So Gaur Keshava Das feels that he can win the argument for women diksha gurus by painting a "doomsday scenario", and categorizing us, specifically myself, as "smartas".

So he does not, by his words, give credit to Srila Prabhupada, who himself was an

Indian, for his espousal of “varnashram does not depend on birth alone”. Prabhupada felt that it was “shastra sammata” – in adherence to shastras – to give brahminial initiation – specifically the sacred thread, and sannyas initiation to men not born in one of the three upper castes, the brahmanas, kshatriyas, and vaishyas.

However, Prabhupada did NOT offer the sacred thread for women. He made the distinction.

Gaur Keshava Das wants us to give up making distinction between “spiritual men and women”.

This is in fact egalitarianism in action. By employing pejorative terminology to give the opposition to his own heterodox views a bad name, he feels he can win the argument. But the argument should be won by adhering to the body of the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, vedic shastras, and vedic tradition.

That he has not been able to do, because his views contradict what Srila Prabhupada clearly taught.

10. Gaur Keshava Das accuses us of “skin disease”. Again, here he indulges in untruth in order to paint those who oppose female diksha gurus as evil and offenders of the Gaudiya siddhanta. It is just plain dishonest and unfair of him to do so. It does not show him in a good light.

11. Gaura Keshava Das wrote: “Those who want to accept women according to their actual qualifications and abilities are described by Basu Ghosh as western liberal egalitarian feminists. I disagree. Acceptance of FDGs is a Gaudiya tradition since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century (albeit in less number than male brahmins of course). THAT IS A HISTORICAL FACT.”

Just writing that something is a “historical fact” does not in and of itself make it one! He has not provided the evidence, and we know that Prabhupada referred to only two or three women as “gurus and acharyas”. He did not refer to them as diksha gurus.

Our line is a “Bhagavat line” and not a diksha line. There are “time gaps” in the line that Prabhupada refers to in his introduction to the Bhagavad-gita where he mentions the gurus in our guru parampara.

The very same Prabhupada outlined the system of initiation, pancharatrika vidhi, in detail in his purport in Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 15.108. He and Srila Saraswati Thakur followed – and thus taught by their example, this system.

To allege that we somehow are opposed to this system is another dishonest attempt to blacken our names with a view to win an argument.

Debate is not won by indulging in making false claims against one’s ideological opponents, but by establishing the truth with reference to proper evidence. In our case that is guru, sadhu, and shastra.

This Gaur Keshava Das has been unable to do, because he is proposing a doctrine that just does not exist in vedic shastra, nor is it extent in vaishnava society – in any of the four sampradayas.

12. Gaur Keshava Das wrote:

“Basu Ghosh and party want everyone to believe that the position of diksha guru is not a purely spiritual position but it is a position that requires social and material qualifications like being born male. We totally reject this sexist definition of the qualifications of diksha guru which is based solely on bodily consciousness. Basu Ghosh wants us to believe that we are all equal spiritually, but males are more equal spiritually than females. LOL!”

What does it mean by “purely spiritual position”?

We are all in this material world, born into human bodies, that encase inside of each body a jivatma. Baddha jivas – entangled in the material body, covered by the five gross, and three subtle elements, and under the influence of the three qualities – gunas.

What then does he mean by “spiritual”?

It is Bhagavad-gita – the words of Lord Krishna – where distinction - the caste system aka varnashram dharma, is taught. So the Bhagavad-gita is then not “spiritual”?

“Sexist”. It’s a “buzz word” for egalitarians to propagate apasiddhanta and attempt to win an argument by blackening the opposition.

All followers of the Bhagavad-gita recognize that all living entities are equal as jivas, not just human beings, but the animals, birds, reptiles, insects, etc. All are baddha jivas. As per Gita 5.18.

But the same Bhagavad-gita teaches that there are distinctions, as per 9.34, where women and shudras are categorized by LORD KRISHNA HIMSELF, as being born in sinful wombs – papayonayaha. We admit that we have taken such a lower birth.

To adhere to the bodily distinctions may be “sexist” as Gaur Keshava Das rants, but it is also adherent to the teachings of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita! So we will adhere to those teachings, and he can condemn them and proclaim himself a true follower, but the fact is that he is indeed under the mistaken influence of Western egalitarian thought by his attempt to paint those who do accept the teachings of Bhagavad-gita as somehow misguided!

Prabhupada in so many of his purports made distinction between men and women, and I dare state the obvious: so did Mahaprabhu!

As a member of the sannyas ashram, he avoided the company of women almost totally! Was He thus “sexist”? Was Srila Prabhupada “sexist”?

Srila Saraswati Thakur propagated the revival of the varnashram system, and the sannyas ashram, which was not followed by Gaudiya Vaishnavas after Mahaprabhu. Therefore, his followers are sometimes known as Saraswats. Varnashram dharma means making bodily distinction. Not that because our innate identity is eternal spirit – satchidananda - jivatma, that we can or should reject varnashram dharma.

Here is where the logic of Gaur Keshava Das is heterodox. He wants us all to believe that adherence to varnashram dharma is “smarta”. In one fell swoop he negates all that Prabhupada, and indeed Lord Krishna taught about varnashram dharma!

Srimad Bhagavatam describes varnashram dharma in numerous places. The first canto, seventh canto, and eleventh canto give detailed instructions about varnashram dharma.

Is the Bhagavatam somehow “smarta”? But by the logic put forward in the letter of Gaur Keshava Das, he would have us believe that it is!

In conclusion, although I wish Gaur Keshava Das well, I cannot accept the heterodox theories that he wishes us to accept. They contradict what guru, sadhu, and shastra teach, as pointed out herein above.

Hare Krishna!

dasanudas,

**On Mon, Jan 28, 2019 at 1:53 PM Sati devi dasi**

<[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear SABHA members and guests of our conversation,  
please accept my humble obeisance  
All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

This is the second official reminder not to exclude Mother Visakha's email from this conversation.  
Please kindly, before hitting the SEND button, make sure you have her email in. It takes 10 seconds and we would really appreciate your kind attention to this matter.

Please allow me to make one comment, if we miss such an important detail, there must be other important details we are missing.

Hope for your kind understanding,

best regards,  
ys Sati dd

On Sun, Jan 27, 2019 at 5:00 AM David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

Here is a new posting by Gaura Keshava pr further disputing the points made by Basu Ghosh pr. re Lakshmi Tatahar's position. It is reprinted by permission.

Basu Ghosh admits that we do not accept everything that Laksmi Tatachar believes. Yet he still considers him an authority on this particular subject i.e. FDGs.

Notice that he never asked him his opinion on foreign or sudra born male gurus. WHY? Because Laksmi Tatachar doesn't accept them also. Neither does he even think one can cross the ocean and retain his caste. There are any number of caste-by-birth conscious persons who we can ask about these issues but none of them will admit women, sudra males or foreigners as gurus.

So in doing this Basu Ghosh falls prey to the ardha-kukuta nyaya the logic of half a chicken. He accepts Laksmi Tatachars opinions about women but not his opinions about foreigners or those not born in brahmin families. Half truth is no better than a lie. Srila Prabhupada his own gurus says women can be gurus



but he would prefer to accept half the truth from a Ramanuja caste guru.

What Basu Ghosh fails to understand when he calls me a liberal is that Srila Prabhupada was also a liberal when it comes to these matters.

Once again I have no problem if Basu Ghosh wants to live according to the sastric directions of Dharma Sastras which call him an outcast being a foreigner and which deny sudra males, women and outcastes the possibility of being diksha gurus. But what I am against is cherry picking Dharma Sastras and suggesting that ONLY women be excluded from something that foreigners and males born sutras are also excluded from.

It is up to the ISKCON leadership to decide how much or how little the rules of Dharma Sastras i.e. Varnasharam social rules are to be follow or not within their institution. But what I object to is arbitrary enforcement of such medieval social standards on ONLY women and not men. That is hypocritical.

>> But the fact that female diksha guru is very rare -- if not  
>> non-existent -- we agree with.

We should note that being a Vaisnava or Vaisnavi itself is very rare, even exceptional in this world. Lord Krishna in the Gita says:

manusyanam sahasresu  
kascid yatati siddhaye  
yatatam api siddhanam  
kascin mam vetti tattvatah

Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.

Please note how exceptional it is for a person to know the science of Lord Krishna fully which is the definition of the qualification for being guru in Gaudiya tradition or sampradaya.

FDG is non-existent to my knowledge in Ramanuja Sampradaya (except for Laksmi devi herself), a community that up till now hasn't included many foreigners, unlike ISKCON. How then can that community's standards be compared to those of ISKCON that includes people from all over the world?

However it is there in Gaudiya Sampradaya tradition since the 16th century.

So why ask an ORTHODOX Ramanuja caste-guru his opinion about a standard for the Gaudiya Sampradaya?

Probably Basu Ghosh does this because he knows if he asked a Gaudiya they would cite the historical fact that it is accepted (albeit it is still rare and that is admitted) in Gaudiya Sampradaya. In fact his own guru Srila Prabhupada knew that and himself on two occasions spoke of Jahnava Thakurani as an example of FDGs in the Gaudiya Sampradaya. See below for Srila Prabhupada on Jahnava Thakurani FDG

Please note that even Laksmi Tatachar (I have not yet had a chance to fully respond to his video but I will) said:



1. If there is a need there can be FDGs. (Arguably there is a need in ISKCON. There are very very few gurus in ISKCON for the number of people that ISKCON is preaching to i.e. the whole world population. And according to ISKCON leadership there are apparently very few people who are qualified.)

2. If some lady is being automatically accepted and approached by many people then it can happen naturally. Something which Prabhupada also stated, i.e. that gurus will be self effulgent. The fact is that there is at least one highly qualified ISKCON lady who has many people approaching her for diksha having preached and inspired faith in them for decades. Such an exceptional person whether male or female is qualified to be guru and not just siksha guru but diksha guru also according to Srila Prabhupada. Even Laksmi Tatachar seems to agree with this. See this point in the video.

>> "The history of vaishnavi diksha gurus in the Gaudiya sampradaya"

>> mostly consists of caste goswaminis.

So now we have to decide on what "tradition" means. Basu Ghosh wants to conserve a tradition. I also want to conserve a tradition. And I agree with Basu Ghosh that in the Gaudiya Math and ISKCON up till now the tradition is that women don't give diksha. In fact in 1978 ISKCON created the first foreign male diksha gurus. So ISKCON broke the sastric tradition by creating foreign male diksha gurus in 1978. Bhaktisiddhanta broke the sastric tradition in the 1900's by giving sacred threads to his disciples not born in brahmin families. Srila Prabhupada broke sastric tradition by giving his foreign male and women disciples the gayatri mantra in the 1960's. So apparently we are all liberals who are breaking sastric traditions from Bhaktisiddhanta, to Prabhupada to ISKCON leaders today, to Basu Ghosh and also myself. We are all liberals who are breaking some traditions of Dharma Sastras.

(Please also note that Laksmi Tatachar himself a Tengalai Ramanuja guru breaks Dharma Sastra traditions by giving initiation into a Vedic mantra to women and sudras which Vadakalai Ramanuja gurus never do. So Laksmi Tatachar himself is a liberal in this sense too. Arguably Ramanuja himself 1000 years ago also gave this Vedic mantra to all without considering the rules of Dharma Sastra that it cannot be given to women or sudras. So even 1000 years ago Ramanuja himself was a liberal. Persons who very strictly follow literally the Dharma Sastra in all the say are called Smartas or strict followers of the Smrtis. As you see above none of us from Laksmi Tatachar down to myself are Smartas in this sense. Each of the persons mentioned above have broken some rules of Dharma Sastra to advance Vaisnavism. And thus they all can be called liberals.)

So the tradition Basu Ghosh wants to preserve is the Gaudiya Math tradition not to allow women to give diksha. By the way, no householders or foreigners in Gaudiya Math also give diksha. So ISKCON has already broken that Gaudiya Math tradition in 1978.

The tradition I want to preserve is the Gaudiya Sampradayas tradition of allowing for FDGs since the early 16th century (e.g. Jahnava Thakurani). I'm not suggesting all women be diksha gurus, neither am I in favor of all men being diksha gurus. Prabhupada gave the qualification Yei Krsna Tattva Vetta Sei Guru Hoy. Read my article 5 Myths about FDGs in ISKCON.

Not only that but there are several FDGs in Bhaktivinoda Thakurs guru

parampara. Are they bogus? Are their mantras dead? Basu Ghosh and others of his camp have stated openly that they consider those FDGs mantras as dead, meaning that Bhaktivinodas diksha was bogus and his received mantra also dead. Ask him what he believes about this????? I strongly disagreed with this when it was openly stated in an email discussion many years ago. Basu Ghosh and his party want to gloss over these FACTS OF HISTORY. They want to dismiss all FDGs as bogus and their paramparas also as bogus. Similarly many in the Gaudiya Math and ISKCON want to reject the diksha of Bhaktivinoda by Bipina Bihari Goswami.

Thus for Basu Ghosh and his party the tradition or sampradaya they accept is ONLY as old as the Gaudiya Math. All Gaudiya Vaisnavas before that time who did not agree with his ideas now are not to be accepted. Thus he doesn't ask Gaudiya Vaisnavas their understanding, he instead asks a very orthodox Ramanuja Vaisnava who he knows will back his ideas on women. But this is hypocritical because he doesn't bother to ask that same Ramanuja Vaisnava his ideas on those born less than brahmin, and foreigners. He doesn't ask those questions because he knows that the answers will be too sastric and too traditional even for him to accept. Thus Basu Ghosh and his party want to present a half-truth which is worse than a lie.

Laksmi Tatachar belongs to and wants to preserve the tradition that no women, persons born less than brahmin or foreigners can be diksha gurus. Not only that, but his idea is that ONLY the eldest son of one of the 74 seminal lineages coming from the persons chosen by Ramanuja can be diksha guru.

Which tradition do you think deserves to be preserved. We must define what we mean by tradition first before we decide.

Firstly philosophical definitions have to be agreed upon. Before which no fruitful discussion on this issue can be had.

Basu Ghosh says I want to change tradition, I say, he wants to change tradition, because we have different ideas of what tradition is.

So it is up to the ISKCON leadership to decide how much and how little Varnashrama social rules are to be adopted by the institution.

>> We -- specifically Srila Saraswati Thakur and his followers, i.e.

>> Srila Prabhupada and most of the Gaudiya Math diaspora -- don't

>> accept the caste goswami lines as bona fide.

Strawman argument! Prabhupada himself accepted Jahnava Thakurani as a bonafide diksha guru FDG. And Prabhupada himself stated that women can be diksha gurus. Basu Ghosh has to go to Laksmi Tatachar or to Bharadvaja Samhita because he doesn't want to accept Prabhupada.

Yes, ISKCON follows some traditions of the Gaudiya Math and Bhaktisiddhanta. However ISKCON also breaks some Gaudiya Math traditions.

All gurus in Gaudiya Math are male sannyasis. Not only that but ONLY one sannyasi diksha guru is allowed in one institution i.e. math. How is that the



Sat, Feb 2, 2019 at 3:02 PM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: nrsimhananda@gmail.com

Cc: damodara.bvks@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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This is the reply I got from the lady who told me there were many female gurus after speaking to her brother's daughter. Turns out she was mistaken.

I talked to my brother's daughter in Vrindaban. She says Srivaishnavism does not have any female Acharyaas, apart from Aandaal who was an Alwazh. So it looks like no female was either discouraged or encouraged to become an Acharya in Stivaishnavism. They were neither vocal about their rights or their not having any rights.

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 9:29 AM



[Krishna Kirti Das](#)

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Dear Mahatma Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

In the meantime, we followed up on our own to check out your sources. Yesterday, one of our people, Sridhar Srinivasa Prabhu, who is born in Sri Vaisnava brahmana family, went to the Sri Ranganatha, Vrindavan, temple website to find their contact information and call them. The number on the [website](#) is 8130808180, and at that number he spoke with a lady named Anagha Srinivasan, who identified herself as the manager of the temple.

She said that she knew a Swati Mahalakshmi who lives in Hyderabad, but there is no one she knows as her brother who works in any capacity at the temple. And it is not clear that the Swati Mahalakshmi she knows is the same one you are referring to.

After hearing this, and considering what you have said before about this Swati Mahalakshmi, my conclusion is that you have not been entirely straight forward with us about her. She may in fact exist, but there is enough reason now to believe that not all that you have told us about her or what you say she has said is true.

Moreover, in light of your first posting of this lady, your most recent statement of retraction gives further cause to doubt the truthfulness of your correspondence thus far. You wrote (more below):

On Sat, Feb 2, 2019 at 3:02 PM Mahatma Das  
<[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

This is the reply I got from the lady who told me there were many female gurus after speaking to her brother's daughter. Turns out she was mistaken.

I talked to my brother's daughter in Vrindaban. She says Srivaishnavism does not have any female Acharyaas, apart from Aandaal who was an Alwazh. So it looks like no female was either discouraged or encouraged to become an Acharya in Stivaishnavism. They were neither vocal about their rights or their not having any rights.

But in your email on Jan 22, you wrote that this lady came from "a lifetime Sri Vaisnava from a family of many generations of Sri Vaisnavas", and you stated that "this devotee is quite familiar with their history." But you say she says, "So it looks like no female was either discouraged or encouraged to become an Acharya in Stivaishnavism." What do you mean "it looks like". I thought she was from a family of many generations of Sri Vaisnavas. This is something an outsider is expected to say, not an insider.

Moreover, now she is asking the daughter of her brother, who we can't verify works at the Sri Ranganatha Temple in Vrindavan, about these things? The point is, that being in such a close family relationship, if her niece has this information, she would also have this information. Yet here you are saying she is asking her niece. How come?

Another odd thing you say in your Jan 22nd letter is this: "I asked if there are different qualifications for males and female diksa gurus in the Sri Sampradaya. She said no." If this person was a real person in "many generations of Sri Vaisnavas", she wouldn't have even said anything like this, because she wouldn't have known of any women that could even have been considered acarya. So, how could she talk so bluntly about



there being no difference in qualification between men and women when she doesn't know of any women (because there aren't any)?

But, this is a talking point that is found in ISKCON SAC position papers: "there is no higher level of qualification required for women as compared to men" (2005 paper) and "The overall conclusion is that there are not different sets of qualifications to be a guru for various classes of people, including women" (2013 paper).

Your Swati Mahalakshmi said, according to you, "I asked how the Gurus are approved. She said if someone is having sisyas they will interview the sisyas and if they are doing well the acharyas will ask the siksa guru to initiate.. This process is applicable for both men and women."

Just months prior to this correspondence, we researched how Sri Vaisnavas choose their gurus, and there are different systems in place for that. The objective of our research was on another question that is a hot topic with the GBC: can a disciple accept his own disciples in the presence of his spiritual master.

For Sri Sampradaya, one is that guru appoints his successors, may be one or more successors (generally sons in the same family) who, if qualified, will take over as acharya. An abhishek ceremony will then be conducted to appoint / confer on them the status of acharya. (This is also specified in Hari-bhakti-vilasa, quoting from pancaratra shastra.) Another is if the acharya passes on before naming a successor, then the devotees running the trust set up by the acharya to look after his affairs will identify the servant who is closest to the acharya as his successor. But we never heard of the system that relied on interviewing sishyas "and if they are doing well the acharyas will ask the siksa guru to initiate." That's not how the Sri sampradaya does this, but it's how ISKCON does it.

You said "Mahalakshmi" had said, "Are there many women gurus? She said not so many because they are more inclined to put time into their families and not be public figures."

But this is another talking point from the ISKCON SAC papers on FDG: "Other factors limiting the number of FDGs in our line could be the choice of prospective disciples (who might prefer male gurus), the reluctance of women to assume the role of dīkṣā-gurus (for instance, due to family commitments, or because the husband is a dīkṣā-guru and she functions as guru-patni, or due to other personal choices). . ." (2013 paper)

And finally, you wrote, through this lady named "Mahalakshmi":

"Did Ramanuja discourage women from giving diksa unless they were siddha? No, he never discouraged women from giving diksa until they were siddha. Same qualifications for both i. e. they are qualified by actually being a guru to their disciples.."

She allegedly cited Ramanuja as saying this, but Ramanuja before his departure requested 74 families to be in charge of propagating the sampradaya. These are known as mudhalis or simhasana adhipathis that he established to propagate the sampradaya. If she were actually from a Sri Vaisnava family of many generations, as you had said, she would have known at least this much and not said something so fantastically false.

Given all these fantastic inconsistencies in your correspondence so far, and the fact we have not been able to corroborate the existence of all the people in your story that you have mentioned, you need to clear your name somehow or other. This means that you need to bring these people forward to vouch for you AND give us a means of verifying their identities independent of you.

For example, when and where did you have this conversation with this Swati Mahalakshmi? At whose home, or was it in the temple? On what day, and at what time? Who else was present when you had the discussion? Who else is in the ISKCON congregation in Hyderabad who knows this woman and can confirm her identity? Who is she married to? Does she work, what is her profession? Etc. Same with her brother and his daughter? What are their names? Where do they actually work? etc.

And if you can't, do this, then you should confess to having fabricated this, at least in part.

Either way, you need to clear your name.

Respectfully,

Yours in the service of Srila Prabhupada, Krishna-kirti Dasa

p.s. You should also know that this is not going to go away by ignoring it.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>

Date: Tue, Jan 22, 2019 at 7:14 PM

Subject: Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

To: <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>

Cc: <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>,

<[chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com)>,

<[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>, <[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>,

<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>, <[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)>,

<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>, <[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)>,

<[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>, <[pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com)>,

<[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com)>, <[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com)>,

<[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com)>, <[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net)>

, <[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com)>, <[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com)>, <[BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net)>, <[dhruva.k.108@gmail.com](mailto:dhruva.k.108@gmail.com)>, <[divyajps@yahoo.com](mailto:divyajps@yahoo.com)>, <[Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net)>, <[Kratudas108@yahoo.com](mailto:Kratudas108@yahoo.com)>, <[mpd.vda@gmail.com](mailto:mpd.vda@gmail.com)>, <[Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net)>, <[mahatmadasa@gmail.com](mailto:mahatmadasa@gmail.com)>, <[ruciradasi@gmail.com](mailto:ruciradasi@gmail.com)>, <[siddha\\_007@163.com](mailto:siddha_007@163.com)>, <[janavidevi@hotmail.com](mailto:janavidevi@hotmail.com)>, <[sriradhita@gmail.com](mailto:sriradhita@gmail.com)>, <[vrnda16@icloud.com](mailto:vrnda16@icloud.com)>

Krishna Kirti Prabhu,

I hit reply all but it's not showing anyone else is receiving (on my phone now).. If this is the case, can you forward this email to our list?

Thank you

Mahatma das

Below is the email I am sending today.

I am in Hyderabad now and spent time speaking to a lifetime Sri Vaisnava from a family of many generations of Sri Vaisnavas. This devotee is quite familiar with their history.

I asked do you have female diksa gurus. She said yes.

I asked if there are different qualifications for males and female diksa gurus in the Sri Sampradaya. She said no.

I asked how the Gurus are approved. She said if someone is having sisyas they will interview the sisyas and if they are doing well the acharyas will ask the siksa guru to initiate.. This process is applicable for both men and women..

Are there many women gurus? She said not so many because

they are more inclined to put time into their families and not be public figures.

Did Ramanuja discourage women from giving diksa unless they were siddha? No, he never discouraged women from giving diksa until they were siddha. Same qualifications for both i. e. they are qualified by actually being a guru to their disciples..

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 10:00 AM



**Bob Cohen**

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti

Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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Krishna kirti:

How dare u call mahatma a liar.

How dare you!!! U can question facts but to question his veracity ? Horrible of you. It just shows us not to trust you since this is not the way of a gentleman.

Nrsimhananda:

Please remove me from this thread .

I do not associate with maha offenders

Ys

Bt

Sent from iPhone

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 11:06 AM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi



<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami  
<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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**Brahma-tirtha,**

I deny vehemently that I have called him a liar. I have merely said that his testimony is so inconsistent the facts that he has to come forward with the sources he is citing AND give us a means of verifying them independently. It remains to be seen whether further facts, that HE has to bring forward, will exonerate him.

Sorry, Brahma-tirtha, but all you are trying to do here is distract from getting to the substance of the issue.



Unfortunately, you have descended to name-calling. You are the one who is acting ungentlemanly.

Yours in the service of Srila Prabhupada,

Krishna-kirti Dasa

p.s. You can shout or scream about this all you want, but if he doesn't come forward with more sources, we might take this to his disciples and others in the ISKCON congregation. So, I advise you to counsel him to

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 11:32 AM

[Krishna Kirti Das](#)

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti

Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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I don't think some of you appreciate how serious Mahatma Prabhu's mis-statements are. As some of you know, this discussion so far has been largely confined to ISKCON inner circles, but certain inconsistent facts have obliged us to try to verify Mahatma Prabhu's claims outside of ISKCON, starting with the Sri Ranganath temple in Vrindavan.

Our next step will be to share some of our correspondence on this with the heads of that temple and inform them that an ISKCON guru has been saying these things and taking their name, and we want to verify the claims he says some of the people in their sampradaya are making and the identity of the people he is quoting. Now, everything they say might support what Mahatma Prabhu has been saying, but then it might not.

In other words, this is could affect how other bona fide Vaisnava sampradayas see us. And no amount of outrage or posturing is going to prevent this.

But this could be avoided if Mahatma Prabhu does the needful to help us fully corroborate his statements.

Respectfully,

Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 12:53 PM



[pancaratnadas](#)

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti

Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,

janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,

Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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Why the outrage here. A statement has been made as a proof

of fact to support other statements. But if this statement is proven false then it puts other stated and related facts in doubt. Just because Krishna Kirti Prabhu questions this statement and raises doubt regarding other statements of Mahatma Prabhu does not mean insult, he is simply raising doubt. Why would someone then need to chastise him, he has every right. Something is presented as fact but cannot be verified and indeed found to not be the fact, this is serious.

Your servant pancaratna dasa

Sent from my MI MAX 2

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 1:18 PM



**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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Too many times in Iskcon's history have we cut off communication due to a perceived aparadhe - real or implied. I've witnessed too many discussions fail to dig deeper into seminal issues because someone expressed themselves either too passionately or inappropriately. The baby gets thrown out with the bathwater. There always needs to be a lot of wiggle room for tolerance on all sides. There are too many unnecessary outcasts from Iskcon on the wayside. We ALL have to open our hearts, live forbearance, and manifest forgiveness. Iskcon's history has been to be way too quick on the draw. Let's walk our talk and be charitable. HH Radhanath Swami has been very successful with his emphasis on compassion and love. This is not the time to close our hearts. Krishna Kirti pr has challenged Mahatma pr. He certainly could have said it more diplomatically. Mahatma pr is a seasoned devotee. He can handle it. He will respond overlooking any accusations because he is mature and measured. The answers will help us understand. This debate is not without its emotional component. No one got physically injured like in Mayapur when devotees attacked the GBC 's and skated with an apology. If guru's who had sex with their god brother's wives are still guru's in good standing, then this isn't even a blip. There are countless examples of offenses that have been tolerated for the idea of a greater good. Sabha members, this is NOT a time for righteous indignation. We are exploring a difficult topic. Give everyone some space. Krishna Kirti pr., please be more couched and nuanced in your questioning the statements of devotees. You can see that it doesn't further communication. People are highly sensitive. If you need to run your entries through me first, I'm available. I am anxious to hear from Mahatma pr. as I'm sure many are. We're not going to be deterred by this gliche in what has become a very profound sharing of viewpoints. It will be of great service to anyone interested in this topic in the future. Continue.

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 1:29 PM



**Sati devi dasi**

<sati.bts@gmail.com>

To: Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti

Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,

janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,

Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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Dear Brahma Tirtha prabhu,

please accept my humble obeisance  
All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

Unfortunately this conversation in the form of a usual email.  
So it is impossible to manage the mail list once and for all.  
Every member manages it while sending his or her reply.

We will take this experience into consideration and will try our  
best not to make the same mistakes in our next discussion.  
Please forgive us for all the inconveniences that may have  
arisen.

with love,  
ys Sati dd

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 4:41 PM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com

Cc: sati.bts@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
damodara.bvks@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
brss108@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com, narahari@naraharidas.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com,



**bobcohen@ivs.edu**

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Krishna Kirti Prabhu,

I only related what she told me. She does come from a family line of Sri Vaisnavas. It appears she was unaware of the situation, although at the time she said definitely there are female gurus.

End of story.

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 4:59 PM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: nrsimhananda@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com

Cc: bobcohen@ivs.edu, sati.bts@gmail.com,  
damodara.bvks@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
brss108@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com,  
divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com, narahari@naraharidas.com,  
pancaratnadas@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com,  
suresvara@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com,  
janavidevi@hotmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com

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Here is what happened, and it was all quite simple and innocent.

My daughter was taking dance lessons from Swati Mahalaxmi at the end of January, and every day we would take lunch with Swati. Swati is quite a knowledgeable devotee in the Sri Sampradaya and because I was doing a lot of research into the female guru issue I thought why not ask her what she knows about women gurus in the Sri Sampradaya. She said there were and said it was normal, so perhaps she was thinking female siksa gurus were giving diksa. I can't say. But I asked her many times and she said, oh yes. And so I shared what she said.

Damodara and Krishna Kirti Prabhus had studied the Sri Sampradaya and said there were no female gurus. And Gaura Keshava mentioned this also, so I also thought something was a little strange. So I asked her again and she said yes there were female gurus, and she mentioned something about different lines in the Sri Sampradaya, so I just thought maybe she is talking about another line.

In any case, I didn't think whether or not they had female gurus was going to sway this discussion one way or the other, but would simple add more detail to the discussion.

Nrmshananda Prabhu asked me to further investigate and when I did she said she would ask her brother. Then I left for Mayapur and wrote her a few days later to see what she found out. And then I copied what she said and sent it to the conference.

So all I did was relate what she said. Now we have found out that she spoke wrongly and the issue should be over, shouldn't it?

I don't know what else to say. I was just sharing information, not trying to write a PhD on the Sri Sampradaya and female gurus. And I wasn't using it as a weapon to silence Krishna Kirti or Damordara Prabhus. So can we kindly just leave it for what it was: some information that I was given that we found to be untrue?

In a message dated 2/3/2019 1:19:12 PM India Standard Time, [nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com) writes:

Too many times in Iskcon's history have we cut off communication due to a perceived aparadhe - real or implied. I've witnessed too many discussions fail to dig deeper into seminal issues because someone expressed themselves either too passionately or inappropriately. The baby gets thrown out with the bathwater. There always needs to be a lot of wiggle room for tolerance on all sides. There are too many unnecessary outcasts from Iskcon on the wayside. We ALL have to open our hearts, live forbearance, and manifest forgiveness. Iskcon's history has been to be way too quick on the draw. Let's walk our talk and be charitable. HH Radhanath Swami has been very successful with his emphasis on compassion and love. This is not the time to close our hearts. Krishna Kirti pr has challenged Mahatma pr. He certainly could have said it more diplomatically. Mahatma pr is a seasoned devotee. He can handle it. He will respond overlooking any accusations because he is mature and measured. The answers will help us understand. This debate is not without its emotional component. No one got physically injured like in Mayapur when devotees attacked the GBC 's and skated with an apology. If guru's who had sex with their god brother's wives are still guru's in good standing, then this isn't even a blip. There are countless examples of offenses that have been tolerated for the idea of a greater good. Sabha members, this is NOT a time for righteous indignation. We are exploring a difficult topic. Give everyone some space. Krishna Kirti pr., please be more couched and nuanced in your questioning the statements of devotees. You can see that it doesn't further communication. People are highly sensitive. If you need to run your entries through me first, I'm available. I am anxious to hear from Mahatma pr. as I'm sure many are. We're not going to be deterred by this gliche in what has become a very profound sharing of viewpoints. It will be of great service to anyone interested in this topic in the future. Continue.

On Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 11:32 AM Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

I don't think some of you appreciate how serious Mahatma Prabhu's mis-statements are. As some of you

know, this discussion so far has been largely confined to ISKCON inner circles, but certain inconsistent facts have obliged us to try to verify Mahatma Prabhu's claims outside of ISKCON, starting with the Sri Ranganath temple in Vrindavan.

Our next step will be to share some of our correspondence on this with the heads of that temple and inform them that an ISKCON guru has been saying these things and taking their name, and we want to verify the claims he says some of the people in their sampradaya are making and the identity of the people he is quoting. Now, everything they say might support what Mahatma Prabhu has been saying, but then it might not.

In other words, this could affect how other bona fide Vaisnava sampradayas see us. And no amount of outrage or posturing is going to prevent this.

But this could be avoided if Mahatma Prabhu does the needful to help us fully corroborate his statements.

Respectfully,

Krishna-kirti Dasa

On Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 11:06 AM Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Brahma-tirtha,

I deny vehemently that I have called him a liar. I have merely said that his testimony is so inconsistent the facts that he has to come forward with the sources he is citing AND give us a means of verifying them independently. It remains to be seen whether further facts, that HE has to bring forward, will exonerate him.

Sorry, Brahma-tirtha, but all you are trying to do here is distract from getting to the substance of the issue. Unfortunately, you have descended to name-calling. You are the one who is acting ungentlemanly.

Yours in the service of Srila Prabhupada,

Krishna-kirti Dasa

p.s. You can shout or scream about this all you want, but if he doesn't come forward with more sources, we might take this to his disciples and others in the ISKCON congregation. So, I advise you to counsel him to

On Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 10:24 AM Bob Cohen <[bobcohen@ivs.edu](mailto:bobcohen@ivs.edu)> wrote:

Krishna kirti:

How dare u call mahatma a liar.

How dare you!!! U can question facts but to question his veracity ? Horrible of you. It just shows us not to trust you since this is not the way of a gentleman.

Nrsimhananda:

Please remove me from this thread .

I do not associate with maha offenders

Ys

Bt

Sent from iPhone

On Feb 2, 2019, at 10:59 PM, Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 5:34 PM



**Bob Cohen**

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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**Kk said:**

And if you can't, do this, then you should confess to having fabricated this, at least in part.

I stand by my prior comments

Kk owes an apology . He can ask to verify facts, he cannot call mahatma a liar. He has stepped outside the liberal boundary of Vaishnava etiquette. I hope others on the thread see the great danger in this.

Bt

Sent from iPhone

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 5:52 PM



**[David Shapiro](#)**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada



dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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I agree that an apology is in order. Let's see.

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 6:50 PM



**divya priya dd**

<divyajps@yahoo.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall



<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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AGREE !!!!

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 7:06 PM



**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen  
<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>,  
Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami  
<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara  
Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti  
Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata  
Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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Dear Mahatma Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances and apologies.

With the information from your letter below, I was able to find the phone number of Smt. Mahalaxmi in Hyderabad, and I called her and spoke to her. And she indeed verified that she spoke with you about the subject of female gurus. So the first doubt that I had was whether this woman existed at all is put to rest. She exists and vouches for you.

Secondly, I asked her to verify some of the statements that you initially reported that came from her. According to her, she had noted that there was Aandal, one of the twelve Alvaras and who was a woman and very elevated but that she never said that Sri Vaisnava sampradaya there were female gurus. She said she would find out for you. So, while there is a difference between what she told me she told you and what you initially said, there was no willful fabrication on your part and that the difference was just due to human error, misunderstanding, etc. So, I deeply regret having held this doubt about you in this matter.

Then she made a clarification that in her own experience, no one ever told her that she could not do something, like become guru, but that she never asked the question. She said, "Never said, because I never asked." And she said she felt that "If I was qualified, they would have not said no." And she said she communicated that to you as well.

Now, as to other things I have said in this matter, the way in which they were asked was not mindful of your seniority. For this I am truly sorry. For many months, I have been

researching this subject in depth and collaborating with other devotees mining historical documents and learning the practices of the various lineages.

I retract any statements of going to your disciples and others in the ISKCON congregation. I certainly have no intention of sullyng your reputation in any way. Please forgive me for having made this threat. You, Mahatma Prabhu, are a great soul (no pun intended), and I'm convinced that you are doing your level best to understand all sides of this VDG issue.

I beg your forgiveness and pardon, and I also beg the forgiveness and pardon of the other SABHA members who took offense at my challenge.

Your wretched servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 7:11 PM



**[Jahnvi Devi](#)**

<janavidevi@hotmail.com>

To: divya priya dd <divyajps@yahoo.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>,

Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti

Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
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<siddha\_007@163.com>, Visakha Dasi  
<dasivisakha@gmail.com>

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I agree.

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Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 8:52 PM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com

Cc: nrsimhananda@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu,  
sati.bts@gmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
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dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
pdb108@yahoo.com, suresvara@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com,  
vrnda16@icloud.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com,  
dasivisakha@gmail.com

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Dear Krishna Kirti,

Thank you for your reply. Of course, I accept your apology and request for forgiveness.

Yes, perhaps some miscommunication was there between her and I, but my wife and daughter were there during the conversation and shared the same understanding I had. Anyway, all is well that ends well.

Hare Krsna,  
Mahatma das

In a message dated 2/3/2019 7:06:20 PM India Standard Time, [krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com) writes:

Dear Mahatma Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances and apologies.

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Now, as to other things I have said in this matter, the way in which they were asked was not mindful of your seniority. For this I am truly sorry. For many months, I have been researching this subject in depth and collaborating with other devotees mining historical documents and learning the practices of the various lineages.

I retract any statements of going to your disciples and others in the ISKCON congregation. I certainly have no intention of sullyng your reputation in any way. Please forgive me for having made this threat. You, Mahatma Prabhu, are a great soul (no pun intended), and I'm convinced that you are doing your level best to understand all sides of this VDG issue.

I beg your forgiveness and pardon, and I also beg the forgiveness and pardon of the other SABHA members who took offense at my challenge.

Your wretched servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

On Sun, Feb 3, 2019 at 4:59 PM Mahatma Das  
<[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

Here is what happened, and it was all quite simple and innocent.

My daughter was taking dance lessons from Swati Mahalaxmi at the end of January, and every day we would take lunch with Swati. Swati is quite a knowledgeable devotee in the Sri Sampradaya and because I was doing a lot of research into the female guru issue I thought why not ask her what she knows about women gurus in the Sri Sampradaya. She said there were and said it was normal, so perhaps she was thinking female siksa gurus were giving diksa. I can't say. But I asked her many times and she said, oh yes. And so I shared what she said.

Damodara and Krishna Kirti Prabhus had studied the Sri Sampradaya and said there were no female gurus. And Gaura Keshava mentioned this also, so I also thought something was a little strange. So I asked her again and she said yes there were female gurus, and she mentioned something about different lines in the Sri Sampradaya, so I just thought maybe she is talking about another line.

In any case, I didn't think whether or not they had female gurus was going to sway this discussion one way or the other, but would simple add more detail to the discussion.

Nrmshananda Prabhu asked me to further investigate and when I did she said she would ask her brother. Then I left for Mayapur and wrote her a few days later to see what she found out. And then I copied what she said and sent it to the conference.

So all I did was relate what she said. Now we have found out that she spoke wrongly and the issue should be over, shouldn't it?

I don't know what else to say. I was just sharing information, not trying to write a PhD on the Sri Sampradaya and female gurus. And I wasn't using it as a weapon to silence Krishna Kirti or Damordara Prabhus. So can we kindly just leave it for what it was: some information that I was given that we found to be untrue?



In a message dated 2/3/2019 1:19:12 PM India Standard Time, [nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com) writes:

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Mon, Feb 4, 2019 at 8:07 AM



**[pancaratnadas](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)**

<[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>

To: Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>, [krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)

Cc: [nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com), [bobcohen@ivs.edu](mailto:bobcohen@ivs.edu),  
[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com), [damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com),  
[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com), [Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net),  
[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com), [BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net),  
[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com), [brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com),  
[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com), [chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com),  
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[Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net), [mahatmada@gmail.com](mailto:mahatmada@gmail.com),  
[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com), [pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com),  
[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com), [askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com),  
[sriradhita@gmail.com](mailto:sriradhita@gmail.com), [vrnda16@icloud.com](mailto:vrnda16@icloud.com),  
[janavidevi@hotmail.com](mailto:janavidevi@hotmail.com), [ruciradasi@gmail.com](mailto:ruciradasi@gmail.com),  
[siddha\\_007@163.com](mailto:siddha_007@163.com), [dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)

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And I piped up in a mood to keep things clear, trying to be neutral, certainly I'm too old to be calling names and do want to hear from everyone.

My opinion is my own but respect to others and certainly don't want to offend. You all have such a deep understanding in your own circumstance and appreciation of Prabhupada, thank you. Looking forward to meeting everyone in Mayapur, there's nothing like face to face.

Your servant **pancaratna dasa**



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Mon, Feb 4, 2019 at 9:35 PM

**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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**Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,**

Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

I apologize for being not so active for last 10 days; I had been in travelling and later in answering other queires that came from a different direction.

About 15 days back, Gaura Kesava Prabhu wrote extensive contentions to our paper, point by point. I got time today to think over them and reply. It helps us to dive deep into the matter when such contentions come. Thankyou very much for that. We enjoy such debates.

Attached is a point by point reply to each of the contention of his. As he did not sent word file but pdf, we could not reply there itself. Moreover, we thought that it makes a very lengthy and complex document if we go on reply each argument there itself. So we have created another document which lists all of his contentions (a total of 19 in number) and have answered each of them.

It is a 18 page document with volumes of new information. I could not make a summary of it, due to lack of my capability to do that. I feel, this complex subject mattter cannot be explained just by short 1-2 page summaries without creating misconceptions. Thus I have attached the full document and I request members to read it.

[For those who do not want to download document, I have pasted the reply below. Footnotes may not properly display]

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

A Reply to

# Gaura-kesava Prabhu's Contentions

Points of Contention Summarized (Click to goto Answer of your choice):

1. [The authors did not consult Srivaisnavas in preparing this document from Bharadvaja-samhita](#)
2. [Bharadvaja-samhita is a bonafide pancaratra.](#)
3. [Why to consult Bharadvaja Samhita which is for Sri Vaisnavas? We have Hari-bhakti-vilasa for Gaudiya Sampradaya.](#)
4. [SP, SBSST, etc. do quote from BS but do not speak anything regarding women from it.](#)
5. [Gopala-bhatta Gosvami's Sat-kriya-sara-dipika is a disputable text.](#)
6. [Bharadvaja-samhita also prohibits those who are by birth sudras, antyajas, etc. from being guru. This makes almost all gurus of ISKCON non-bonafide](#)
7. [Qualifications for who can become guru is clear from Srila Prabhupada's texts: yei Krsna-tattva-vetta sei guru hoi. Why to add or subtract something.](#)
8. [This paper necessitates to accept that](#)
  - a) [That Srila Prabhupada words and actions are not the ultimate guide for what is accepted in ISKCON](#)
  - b) [That the evidence given in this paper is considered as greater than the evidence of Srila Prabhupada's words and actions which have always been and which remain the ultimate evidence for what is accepted in ISKCON](#)
  - c) [We need to resort to teaching beyond Gaudiya vaisnava sastras and teaching of Prabhupada](#)
9. [The strategy to resort to evidences beyond Prabhupada's words and actions and Gaudiya Vaisnava literatures will contradict SP's own statements.](#)
10. [Hari-bhakti-vilasa doesn't mention any prohibition to become diksa-guru based on gender discrimination](#)
11. [In BS 1.44, translators have translated pratyakṣitātmanāthānām literally as "seeing God face to face." But it is not true as Srila Prabhupada never kept the qualification of becoming guru as for the one who sees God face to face](#)
12. [Gaura Kesava Prabhu's alternate translation of pratyakṣitātmanāthānām is "fully cognizant of the science of Kṛṣṇa"](#)
13. [For men also ISKCON doesn't follow instructions of Hari-bhakti-vilasa or Bharadvaja-samhita wherein they state that one born of lower caste should not initiate one born of higher caste. Thus why should ISKCON disregard all instructions of HBV and BS and just follow one single instruction singling out WOMEN.](#)
14. [Unless ISKCON is divided in to castes implementing varnasrama principles is just a joke](#)
15. [Not allowing women and sudras from becoming diksa-gurus but allowing them to become siksa-guru is a standard argument of Gaudiya vaisnavas outside of ISKCON and Bhaktivinoda dhara, and who have been vilified for that by Srila Prabhupada and SBSST.](#)
16. [The qualification of "seeing God face to face" cannot be practically verified Institutionally and thus miserably fails to give any practical help to ISKCON in this matter.](#)
17. [What this \(SB 4.31.10 purport\) specifically states is that whoever man or woman has brahminical qualifications, he or she is a to be accepted as a brahmin. That's all.](#)
18. [The idea of authors that Bharadvaja samhita is important for modern Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doubtful. BS is relevant for 15<sup>th</sup> century and not today.](#)
19. [Authors don't understand the difference between Gaudiya Vaisnava saranagati and Sri Vaisnava prapatti](#)

Contentions Answered:

1. [The authors did not consult Srivaisnavas in preparing this document from Bharadvaja-samhita](#)
  - We did consult and discuss the texts with Srivaisnava scholars
  - Sridhara Srinivasa Das (mentioned in Acknowledgments) is a Srivaisnava from his birth and his family is strict follower of Srivaisnavism.
  - Till date his father follows his vows, worships salagrama, etc. Sridhara Srinivasa Prabhu, before joining ISKCON, did get initiated in to Srivaisnavism and also performed samit-danam for about 3 years strictly following rules.
  - He is also a learned in Srivaisnava literatures.
  - He has written a book named "A Divine Prophecy" wherein he establishes the prophecy of Srila Prabhupada's advent from famous Sri Vaisnava literatures.
  - In writing this book he extensively travelled all over India and met many Sri Vaisnava scholars and discussed with them
  - While doing this he also discussed our Narada pancaratra slokas with them in order to understand them
  - Also he got the palm leaf manuscripts from Adayar Library in order to confirm the publication we were using. Then he got it confirmed by comparing to the verses and the commentary in the published version
  - He also contacted one professor of Srivaisnavas named Dr. M. A. Venkata Krishnan in Chennai
  - Besides this, recently, we met a Sri Vaisnava Scholar at Sri Rangam (Tamilnadu, South India) working with Muralidhara Bhatta, who is a pradhana arcaka (chief worshipper) of Sri Ranganatha. (for more information about him see [Appendix 1](#) at the end)

- He is the one at whose house Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu stayed while his visit in Srirangam.
- We set at the very place where Lord Caitanya and Venkat Bhatta used to discuss Krishna-katha everyday
- Once again we got verified our understanding of Bharadvaja-samhita, now with much more basis of other sastras. The scholar, named Vasudevan told us that he is ready to discuss these conclusions with anyone who is ready to remain confined to sastric proofs

## 2. Bharadvaja-samhita is a bonafide pancaratra.

- Thankyou very much for accepting this

## 3. Why to consult Bharadvaja Samhita which is for Sri Vaisnavas? We have Hari-bhakti-vilasa for Gaudiya Sampradaya.

Although Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is specifically meant for Gaiḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, it doesn't speak anything specifically about the matter of Vaiṣṇavīs' becoming *dīkṣā-guru* or not. Thus, we need to resort to other *śāstras* for this matter.

Whenever Śrīla Prabhupāda talked about matters related to women's role and activities, he usually quoted from Manu-samhitā. He has hardly quoted anything from Hari-bhakti-vilāsa for matters specifically related to women. Thus, it is not prohibited to resort to other *śāstras* for the matters not clearly discussed in our *śāstra* (here Hari-bhakti-vilāsa). In fact it is a famous rule of Vedic Hermeneutics—*anuktam anyato grāhyam*—that which is not clarified in our scripture should be imported from another scripture; but—*paroktam avirodhī ca*<sup>[1]</sup>—only those instructions which are not opposite to our scripture. Śrīla Prabhupāda followed this rule.

Thus, resorting to Bhāradvāja-samhitā is not transgressing Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, as the subject matter of women can become *dīkṣā-guru* or not, is not discussed there at all. None of the four statements of Śrīla Prabhupāda in this matter can be found in or supported by Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. But all these four statements are found in and supported by Bhāradvāja-samhitā. Thus, resorting to Bhāradvāja-samhitā, in fact, enhances the position of Śrīla Prabhupāda as a staunch representative of *śāstras*.

Remember, Śrīla Prabhupāda himself said—

...stated by Narottama dāsa Thākura, *sādhu-śāstra-guru*: one has to test all spiritual matters according to the instructions of saintly persons, scriptures and the spiritual master. The spiritual master is one who follows the instructions of his predecessors, namely the sādhus, or saintly persons. A bona fide spiritual master does not mention anything not mentioned in the authorized scriptures. Ordinary people have to follow the instructions of *sādhu*, *śāstra* and guru. **Those statements made in the *śāstras* and those made by the bona fide *sādhu* or guru cannot differ from one another**<sup>[2]</sup>.

However, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa does say one thing about women—

***yoṣīto nāvamanyeta na cāsām viśvased budhaḥ |***  
***na caiverṣyur bhavet tāsū nādhikuryāt kadācana ||11.708||***

A wise man should never insult women, nor should he trust them. He should never become jealous of women, nor should he ever appoint them.

***strībhyo'dhikāraṁ na dadyād ity arthaḥ |***

One should not give authority to women (from commentary of Sanātana Gosvāmī on 11.708).

## 4. SP, SBSST, etc. do quote from BS but do not speak anything regarding women from it.

- The section in which this appears is for establishing authority of Bharadvaja-samhita.
- Our point was that our acaryas do quote from Bharadvaja-samhita
- Your logic is that we should accept from other sastras, only those slokas that are quoted by Srila Prabhupada or SBSST, not others.
- By this logic almost whole Hari-bhakti-vilasa we have to reject as majority of the slokas are not quoted by Prabhupada or SBSST. Then our deity worship procedures will all be baseless.
- Thus, this doesn't seem to be a proper logic
- Moreover, it is important to note that whenever Srila Prabhupada spoke about women and her activities he actually did not quote anything from Hari-bhakti-vilasa; he quoted extensively from Manu samhita and other smrtis.

## 5. Gopala-bhatta Gosvami's Sat-kriya-sara-dipika is a disputable text.

- You have to prove your point before claiming this
- In 1904, Srila Bhakti-vinoda Thakura has published this book with Bengali translation (scans attached with this email for personal use only)
- If it would have been a disputable text, why would Bhakti-vinoda Thakura publish it.
- Also in the same publishes text, the slokas we mentioned (in the appendix of the paper) from Bharadvaja-samhita appears and commented by Bhaktivinoda Thakura.
- Thus, it is proved that Bhaktivinoda Thakura accepts Sat-kriya-sara-dipika as bonafide and also Bharadvaja-samhita, mentioned there, as bonafide

## 6. Bharadvaja-samhita also prohibits those who are by birth sudras, antyajas, etc. from being guru. This makes almost all gurus of ISKCON non-bonafide

- Direct answer to this is, NO. ISKCON gurus are not śūdras although they may have born in śūdra or mleccha families.
- We all know that it is a mistake to think one who is born in a brāhmaṇa family is a brāhmaṇa.
- Similarly it is a mistake to think that one born in śūdra or mleccha family is a śūdra or mleccha.
- Varṇa is to be judged by qualities, not by family lineage or heredity. Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us this on numerous occasions in his teachings establishing this fact from guru-sādhu-śāstras.
- Thus, when it is said that a śūdra is prohibited from becoming dīkṣā-guru, it means a person with quality of śūdra is prohibited from being dīkṣā-guru.

## 7. Qualifications for who can become guru is clear from Srila Prabhupada's texts: *yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vetta sei guru hoi*. Why to add or subtract something.

***manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu kaścīd yatati siddhaye |  
yatatām-āpi siddhānām kaścīn-mām vetti tattvataḥ ||BG 7.3||***

*“Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.”*

- *Kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā* is the one who has perfected his Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such persons are very rare. They are siddhas, at least on the platform of *bhāva*
- For such a person no material considerations are to be seen—either he be men, women, antyajā, or even animal. Srila Prabhupada says—

**Prabhupāda: *If a woman is perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness...*** Just like Jāhnavā-devī, Lord Nityānanda's wife, she was ācārya. She was ācārya. She was controlling the whole Vaiṣṇava community....

Wife. Jāhnavā-devī. She was controlling the whole Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community.... ***It is not that woman cannot be ācārya.*** Generally, they do not become. ***In very special case.*** But Jāhnavā-devī was accepted as, but she did not declare....

Kṛṣṇa does not make any discrimination. Kṛṣṇa does not make. Whatever difference is there, it is bodily difference. But as soul, there is equality. So whatever difference we make, that is bodily difference. So when one is above the bodily concept of life, there is no difference. ***Why woman? Even cats and dogs.*** Woman is human being. Even cats and dogs, they have got the same spirit soul. So a learned scholar will see from the spiritual platform. Then there is equality.<sup>[3]</sup>

Thus, we can appoint even animals as diksa-gurus, but only if they are *siddha*.

- Usually whenever Srila Prabhupada spoke about guru, he spoke about liberated siddha souls. However, he indicates—

A person who is liberated acharya and guru cannot commit any mistake, ***but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as guru and acharya by strictly following the disciplic succession.***<sup>[4]</sup>

- Thus comes the set of qualifications that non-liberated gurus need to fulfill in order to strictly follow the disciplic succession.
- Now resorting to Narada pancaratras, from where our diksa-vidhi comes, we find the whole discussion specifically targetted on the topic of qualifications of different persons to become guru. The whole body of instructions there, is exhaustive and we see all instructions of Srila Prabhupada in the matter of qualifications of guru rooted there.
- Now, we do not find much detailed instruction about qualifications of a guru who is not on the liberated platform; but that is what is the reality in ISKCON. So we need to do something.
- Thus, by the famous rule of anuktam-anyato grāhyam & paroktam-avirodhī ca<sup>[5]</sup> (that which is not mentioned in one's literature and needed for completion should be imported from other text unless except those parts that are against our own text), we should resort to Bharadvaja-samhita because we find all the rules in toto, including those mentioned by Prabhupada
- If we don't resort to Bharadvaja samhita then we resort to our own experience and logic and try to legislate rules in order to save ISKCON from having unqualified gurus. Following are some examples from *ISKCON law 6.2.1, GBC 2010 Resolutions*:
  - a) Candidate for guru Must have been initiated for at least 10 years
  - b) Exhibit proficiency in knowledge and understanding of sastras
  - c) Effective in counselling
  - d) Must recognize GBC as ultimate managing authority in ISKCON, support the GBC system, and follow the GBC
  - e) Within previous 10 years should not have been responsible for...
    - Serious criminal activities (minor crimes are okay?)
    - A financial impropriety that put significant funds or other assets at risk
    - Risking legal consequences through the improper handling of funds and assets under his/her control
    - Causing a loss of significant funds through unauthorized actions
    - Any other act of moral turpitude, as defined in the ecclesiastical discretion of the GBC, and/or the legal jurisdiction in which the candidate resides
  - f) Should be nothing in his character, conduct, or circumstances to give rise to doubt about his ability to follow the code of conduct for gurus.
  - g) Should not be involved in any abnormal personal situation. An example of such a situation would be a

disrupted or anomalous family life which could distract a guru from his guru duties or otherwise prove a disturbance to him or his followers.

- None of the above are mentioned in *yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā* verse. According the logic presented in this contention, why do we have them in *ISKCON law 6.2.1 GBC 2010 Resolutions*?
- Many of these laws we actually find detailed in Bharadvaja-samhita. Thus, if we would have resorted to Bharadvaja-samhita earlier then we could have been saved from much trouble.
- For instance,
  - Law *f* is directly mentioned in BS 1.42 as *abhiśasta* definition and symptoms of which are elaborately given in various dharma-sastras.
  - Law *g* is BS 1.38-40, good family lineage which ensures there are minimal disturbances in family life and thus have stable families
  - Law *d* is not proper as per sastras: managing authority can never be above the spiritual brahminical authority. They are to be guided by and under brahminical authority. Thus, a faulty understanding
  - Law *b* is *prājñam* is BS 1.38
- But there are many other considerations mentioned in BS, that ISKCON GBC has not been able to think of. Why to leave them off. Better take full guidance and be saved.
- Thus, resorting to Bharadvaja samhita is justified

#### 8. This paper necessitates to accept that

- a) That Srila Prabhupada words and actions are not the ultimate guide for what is accepted in ISKCON
- b) That the evidence given in this paper is considered as greater than the evidence of Srila Prabhupada's words and actions which have always been and which remain the ultimate evidence for what is accepted in ISKCON
- c) We need to resort to teaching beyond Gaudiya vaisnava sastras and teaching of Prabhupada

- If this paper contradicts clear guidance of Srila Prabhupada in this matter then this point is valid.
  - However, this is not the case. In fact this paper is harmonizing all the four available statements of Srila Prabhupada on this topic without needing to resort to any interpretation at all.
  - Moreover, in the matter of women becoming diksa-guru, we do not have a clear guidance from Srila Prabhupada. If it had been so clear from Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements then, this debate would not have been going on for last 20 years. The fact that there are two strong opinions on both sides, shows that there are statements of Śrīla Prabhupāda supporting both the sides.
  - Thus, we need to either resort to sadhu and sastras for solving the contradiction or we need to resort to our own faulty logic, inference, and speculation. What is better to resort to? Bharadvaja samhita or our speculation?
  - If you can give us a better explanation (than what we have done) to solve the contradiction between the statements of Srila Prabhupada in this regard, without resorting to any speculation, most welcome.
- Till then our paper remains more authoritative as it is strictly based on sastras and proves Srila Prabhupada's strict adherence to sastras. While the other explanations that have been tried so far need to speculate that Srila Prabhupada did not want to implement this sastric instruction for this yuga seeing it impractical; and that he has brought some new rule that defies sastras. For more, please see our recent paper's Appendix 1 (p.18 of pdf) at Link:
- [https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/harinam\\_diksa\\_and\\_fdg-final.pdf](https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/harinam_diksa_and_fdg-final.pdf)
- Also please have a look at Appendix 2 of this document, for the detailed explanation of our harmonization of all four statements of Srila Prabhupada.

#### 9. The strategy to resort to evidences beyond Prabhupada's words and actions and Gaudiya Vaisnava literatures will contradict SP's own statements.

- This means that we think Srila Prabhupada's words are not rooted in sastras; sastras can defy his words
- This means that we are not able to support Prabhupada and our acharyas from sastras
- Then we make Srila Prabhupada as non-bonafide according to the statement of Srila Prabhupada himself—  
If a spiritual master does not speak according to the revealed scripture, he is not to be accepted. Similarly, if a saintly person does not speak according to the *śāstra*, he is not a saintly person. The *śāstra* is the center for all. (Cc 2.20.352, Purport)
- This fear is there for those who are not able to defend Srila Prabhupada and do not have sastric faith on him. Their faith is considered very weak as per Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu and thus it gets shattered as soon as they are confronted by statements from sastras that contradict Prabhupada's statements
- However, it is worth to ask, how we are to explain Cc 2.20.352, purport (and many such statements of his), if we accept this claim of Gaura-kesava Prabhu?
- May I ask where does Srila Prabhupada instruct to not refer to sastras? And if he does instruct this way, how it is to be reconciled with statements like above of Srila Prabhupada?

### 10. Hari-bhakti-vilasa doesn't mention any prohibition to become diksa-guru based on gender discrimination

- Hari-bhakti-vilasa also doesn't mention any prescription for women to become guru
- It just doesn't speak about the matter
- Thus, we resort to the source of Hari-bhakti-vilasa, the pancaratras and find details.
- Please see answer to Que. #3



### 11. In BS 1.44, translators have translated *pratyakṣitātmanāthānām* literally as “seeing God face to face.” But it is not true as Srila Prabhupada never kept the qualification of becoming guru as for the one who sees God face to face

- Seeing God face-to-face here is the word already used by Prabhupada in BG 15.7 purport.
- This is used to show that it is a liberated or *siddha* stage.
- Ours is not just a literal but *rūdhī* translation as well
- Whenever Srila Prabhupada spoke of qualifications of guru he generally spoke of a liberated soul *uttama-adhikārī*. Prabhupada says—

One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of *uttama-adhikārī*. A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an *uttama-adhikārī* as a spiritual master. (Nectar of Instructions, 5)

### 12. Gaura Kesava Prabhu’s alternate translation of *pratyakṣitātmanāthānām* is “fully cognizant of the science of Kṛṣṇa”

- This means he is an *uttama-adhikārī*. Otherwise there is no need of the word **FULLY**.
- In the quote mentioned by you, see what example Srila Prabhupada gives—of Jāhnavā-mātā, the wife of Lord Nityānanda. Do we think that she was not on *uttama-adhikārī* platform?

### 13. For men also ISKCON doesn’t follow instructions of Hari-bhakti-vilasa or Bharadvaja-samhita wherein they state that one born of lower caste should not initiate one born of higher caste. Thus why should ISKCON disregard all instructions of HBV and BS and just follow one single instruction singling out WOMEN.

- Already answered in answer to Ques. #6

### 14. Unless ISKCON is divided in to castes implementing varnasrama principles is just a joke

- ISKCON should never be divided into castes. Castes are based on birth
- But unless ISKCON, as a society, is not divided into varnas and asramas based on qualities and duties, ISKCON may certainly become a joke
- Srila Prabhupada says—

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. *Thākaha āpanāra kaje*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. *Āpanāra kaja ki*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu recommended, *sthāne sthitaḥ*. **And if they do not remain in the *sthāna*, then the *sahajiyā’s* chanting will come.** Just like the *sahajiyās* also have got the beads and..., but they have got three dozen women. This kind of chanting will go on. Just like our (name withheld). He was not fit for *sannyāsa* but he was given *sannyāsa*. And five women he was attached, and he disclosed. **Therefore *varṇāśrama-dharma* is required.** Simply show-bottle will not do. **So the *varṇāśrama-dharma* should be introduced all over the world,** and...

**Satsvarūpa:** Introduced ***starting with ISKCON*** community?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Yes. Brāhmaṇa, kṣatriyas. There must be regular education.

**Hari-śauri:** But in our community, if the..., being as we’re training up as Vaiṣṇavas...then how will we be able to make divisions in our society?

**Prabhupāda:** **Vaiṣṇava** is not so easy. The ***varṇāśrama-dharma*** should be established to become a



**Vaiṣṇava.** It is not so easy to become Vaiṣṇava.

**Hari-śauri:** No, it's not a cheap thing.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Therefore this should be made. Vaiṣṇava, to become Vaiṣṇava, is not so easy. **If**

**Vaiṣṇava, to become Vaiṣṇava is so easy, why so many fall down, fall down?** It is not easy.

—Room Conversation, Māyāpura 14 February 1977

There should be a thorough overhauling of the social system, and society should revert to the Vedic principles, that is, the four varṇas and the four āśramas.

—SB 4.29.54 Purport

Among the four *yugas-Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara* and *Kali*—the *Kali-yuga* is the worst, but if the process of *varṇāśrama-dharma* is introduced, even in this age of *Kali*, the situation of *Satya-yuga* can be invoked. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, is meant for this purpose.

—SB 9.10.51, Purport

So Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement includes this system of division of society. It is perfect society. Therefore we are trying to introduce the *varṇāśrama* system, although it is very difficult nowadays.

—Interview with Trans-India Magazine, New York 17 July 1976

- Seeing above quotes, there remains no doubt that Varnsrama dharma must be established in ISKCON if we are to save ourselves and the whole world. It is not an optional matter for us to decide whether to implement it or not.

## 15. Not allowing women and sudras from becoming diksa-gurus but allowing them to become siksa-guru is a standard argument of Gaudiya vaisnavas outside of ISKCON and Bhaktivinoda dhara, and who have been vilified for that by Srila Prabhupada and SBSST.

- Please see the answer to Que. #6.
- Considering varna based on qualities automatically solves this problem
- Those Gaudiya Vaisnavas outside of Bhaktivinoda dhara, critized us for not following varna-system based on birth. Thus, this doesn't apply to the proposal put forward in our paper in which varna is based on qualities.

## 16. The qualification of “seeing God face to face” cannot be practically verified Institutionally and thus miserably fails to give any practical help to ISKCON in this matter.

- The qualification of being siddha is to be applied only for exceptional cases
- For normal cases, rules are already mentioned in BS 1.38-43
- Exceptions need not be institutionalized
- Especially when norm itself is not in place how can one establish exception
- Exception supports the norm; thus norm must be in place first
- Thus the practical help that this paper gives to ISKCON is to tell it that “do not try to institutionalize an exception as a norm.”
- Srila Prabhupada said “not so many” and “very special case.”
- So we should not dare to make it a general case

## 17. What this (SB 4.31.10 purport) specifically states is that whoever man or woman has brahminical qualifications, he or she is a to be accepted as a brahmin. That's all.

- It does not speak anything specifically about women

In vedic culture there were *brāhmaṇis* (wives of *brāhmaṇa*). But they never took the position of *dīkṣā-guru*. Strictly speaking, women have no *varṇa*.

Śrīla Prabhupada says that “even born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, a woman is taken as woman, not as *brāhmaṇa*.” He gives reason, “because a girl has to follow her husband. So if her husband is *brāhmaṇa*, automatically she becomes *brāhmaṇa*. There is no need of separate reformation. And by chance she may be

married with a person who is not a brāhmaṇa, then what is the use of making her a brāhmaṇa?"

This is because one's *varṇa* is based on two things—*guṇa* and *karma* (*cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśah*, BG 4.13). Besides having *guṇa* or qualities, one must have prescribed duties of a particular *varṇa* in order to be of that *varṇa*.

In case of women, although they may have a particular *guṇa* or quality, *śās*

...

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Mon, Feb 4, 2019 at 9:40 PM



**[Damodara Dasa](#)**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, "Nrsimhananda Prabhu @ LA" <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"



<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Damodara pr's reply to Gaura Keshava's perspective was very illuminating. I've been reading every entry in our email conference and now, google groups, and they keep shedding more light on the subject. I've sent Damodara pr's response to Gaura Keshava pr with an invitation to reply. I don't know about the rest of you, but I have found this debate absolutely riveting. It's better than binging on a cliff-hanging Netflix tv series or watching a life or death courtroom drama. I'm learning so much about our tradition, the hermeneutics of understanding Srila Prabhupada's teachings, and the specific considerations of the present issue. I am convinced that Iskcon has to "get this one right" or wait for superior guidance.

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**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Visakha

Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha  
Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS  
(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Dear Maharajas, Prabhus, and Matas, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAIFpcpUGt4&feature=youtu.be>

This is a video interview of Sri Murali Bhatta, who is in the direct family line of Venkata Bhatta who personally associated with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Sri Rangam. Also joining Murali Bhatta is Sri Laxmi Kumar Thathacharya, a well-known scholar in the Sri Sampradaya. Sridhar Srinavasa Prabhu and Damodara Prabhu interview them in the same room in Sri Rangam that Lord Caitanya and Venkata Bhatta had their

famed discussions.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

p.s. This is only a part of a longer interview on the topic of female diksa-gurus.

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**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Visakha

Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"



<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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This is from a FAQ we are putting together:

1 In your attempts to follow *śāstra*, are you not disregarding Prabhupāda's explicit instruction that all of his female disciples may initiate disciples, as he gave it in a letter to Hamsadūta, Jan. 1969?

I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedānta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedānta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program (Letter to Hamsadūta—Los Angeles 3 January, 1969).

The simple answer to this is that Śrīla Prabhupāda also wanted his disciples to become *siddha*. He wanted them to be on the topmost levels of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, just like he was. Whenever he talks about the bona fide guru, he is almost always talking about this guru who is also a liberated, perfected devotee who has achieved the goal of life, *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

This is shown in this letter to Mukunda, 10 June 1969, New Vrindavan (emphasis ours):

The answer to your Istagosthi questions are as follows: **Unless one is a resident of Krishna Loka, one cannot be a Spiritual Master. That is the first proposition.** A layman cannot be a Spiritual Master, and if he becomes so then he will simply create disturbance. **And who is a liberated person? One who knows Krishna.** It is stated in BG, fourth chapter, anyone who knows Krishna in truth is immediately liberated, and after quitting the present body, he immediately goes to Krishna. That means he becomes a resident of Krishna Loka. **As soon as one is liberated he is immediately a resident of Krishna Loka, and anyone who knows the truth of Krishna can become Spiritual Master.** That is the version of Lord Caitanya. So to summarize the whole thing, **it is to be understood that a bona fide Spiritual Master is a resident of Krishna Loka.**

Your next question, whether the Spiritual Master was formerly a conditioned soul, **actually a bona fide Spiritual Master is never a conditioned soul.** There are three kinds of liberated persons. They are called 1) sadhan siddha, 2) kripa siddha, and 3) nitya siddha. Sadhan siddha means one who has attained perfection by executing the regulative principles of devotional service. Kripa siddha means one who has attained perfection by the special mercy of Krishna and the Spiritual Master, and nitya siddha means one who was never contaminated. The symptoms of nitya siddha is that from the beginning of his life he is attached to Krishna, and he is never tired of rendering service to Krishna. So we have to know what is what by these symptoms. But when one is actually on the siddha platform there is no such distinction as to who is sadhan, kripa, or nitya siddha. When one is siddha, there is no distinction what is what.

These statements of Śrīla Prabhupāda are fully compatible with the evidence we have presented from *Nārada Pañcarātra (Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā)*. According to *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* 1.44, if one is on the level of seeing Kṛṣṇa face-to-face, then one may be a spiritual master. **It is this standard of dikṣā-guru that Śrīla Prabhupāda had in mind when he wrote the letter to Hamsadūta saying both his male and female disciples could accept disciples.** Also note that there is only a six-month difference between the dates of the two letters.

Now, the problem is how do you act as a bona fide spiritual master when you aren't a *siddha*? What if you are not yet a resident of Goloka Vṛndāvana?

The answer to this is by strictly following the disciplic succession. In his 26 April 1968 letter to Janārdana, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

A person who is liberated acharya and guru cannot commit any mistake, but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as guru and acharya by strictly following the disciplic succession.

This means one must follow the *Śrutis, Smṛtis, Purāṇas, Pañcarātras*, etc., in order to act as a bona fide guru *while not yet a resident of Goloka Vṛndāvana*.

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā  
aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate*

Devotional service of the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literatures like the *Upaniṣads, Purāṇas* and *Nārada Pañcarātra* is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society.<sup>[1]</sup>

It is interesting that in this particular translation given by Śrīla Prabhupāda that *Nārada Pañcarātra* is given. And according to this *pañcarātra śāstra*, women aren't allowed to be *dikṣā-guru* until they are *siddha*, and residents of Goloka Vṛndāvana.



This less-qualified category of guru is one that Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke infrequently about. However, in ISKCON today it is the general case, not the exception. Therefore, in order to understand how this category of guru is qualified and allowed to act, we also have to consult the *ācāryas* and *śāstras* in order to know how this may be properly conducted. Thus, we have presented here the authoritative statements of *Nārada Pañcarātra* in order that we may be correctly guided.

[1] *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.101, as quoted in *Bhagavad-gītā, As It Is*, 7.3 purport.  
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**Krishnarupa Dasi**

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Damodara

Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Dear Krishna Kirti prabhu

I watched with interest this short interview re female diksa gurus. One of Muralidhara Bhattar's arguments is that Srila Prabhupada never appointed a woman diksa guru, so why are we keen to do this now.

However, he may not be aware of the very famous SB class where Srila Prabhupada made a declaration to all of the assembled Vaishnavas and Vaishnavis that 'You all become guru'.

We need to keep that in mind. Of course, one can speculate did Srila Prabhupada mean we all become 'siksha' gurus and not 'diksha' gurus; perhaps we can examine this at the SABHA meetings?

yr sr

Krishnarupa dd

*Krishne matir astu*  
**Women's Minister**  
**ISKCON Australia**  
**National Council Member**  
**SABHA Member**

0416 17 97 33  
India: +91 8101 485 058  
Skype: Carolkr1  
[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

I watched with interest this short interview re female diksa  
gurus. One of Muralidhara Bhattar's arguments is that Srila  
Prabhupada never appointed a woman diksa guru, so why are  
we keen to do this now.

I think you may want to see the full interview video (22 min)  
and rethink.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?  
v=WIRKVI8mGbg&t=0s&list=  
PLTXFXnRzIAMHnnTxSOZpE\\_-jSpXKJ1wcv&index=8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIRKVI8mGbg&t=0s&list=PLTXFXnRzIAMHnnTxSOZpE_-jSpXKJ1wcv&index=8)

Muralidhara Bhattar is not basing his argument solely on this  
statement. In the beginning itself they established all their  
arguments based on sastras.

Besides this, the video clearly shows how Sri Sampradaya will  
be looking at ISKCON if we institute VDGs.

SABHA members may not be in knowledge of who  
Muralidhara Bhattar is, thus at the end of this email I have  
pasted his short introduction.

In short, back in 1970s he and his father were the persons who  
certified ISKCON as bonafide sampradaya by writing a letter  
which BBT published in 10s of thousands and distributed  
widely. That marked a turning point in ISKCON's being  
accepted as bonafide in (at least) India.

Thus, their point of view must not be neglected.

Now let us try to come to evidence Muralidhara Bhattar is putting forward:

- \* Srila Prabhupada very well knew that none of the men or women at his time were siddha
- \* He selected only 11 men to initiate on his behalf and later continue
- \* He did not select even a single woman
- \* This shows that given the same conditions of being non-siddha, Srila Prabhupada did discriminate between men and women in terms of becoming diksa-guru
- \* He might have said something. However, when condition came we see from his actions that he did discriminate.
- \* Thus, we can understand from sastra and other instructions of SP that he found there were no siddha at his time and thus he restricted diksa-guru post to men

However, he may not be aware of the very famous SB class where Srila Prabhupada made a declaration to all of the assembled Vaishnavas and Vaishnavis that 'You all become guru'.

This point is already replied. Please see here:

<http://www.harekrsna.com/sun/editorials/10-12/editorials9232.htm>

**Boys and Girls become spiritual master**

We need to keep that in mind. Of course, one can speculate did Srila Prabhupada mean we all become 'siksha' gurus and not 'diksha' gurus; perhaps we can examine this at the SABHA meetings?

Both sides say that the other side is speculating. Who is to decide who is speculating? The debate will end only if higher evidence than our own preconceptions are brought in to picture. From the higher evidence of sastras and sadhu, it is becoming clear that women cannot become diksa-guru unless siddha. This explanation also harmonizes all the statements of SP in this matter without needing to resort to speculation. Sastras are not made by any of pro- or anti-FDG factions. Thus, we cannot accuse them for preconceptions.

However, if someone wants to challenge this explanation, then he needs to bring proper evidences from sastras which are better explaining all the statements of SP and harmonizing them with sadhu. Unless, that is done we are accusing SP to be disregarding sastra and indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly being an atheist.

If someone says that age-old tradition and sastras cannot be applied in 21st century, then he needs to bring a sastra that is relevant for the 21st century. Otherwise he just speaks on the whimsical platform. If he says that SP books are for 21st century, then you find it full of statements of vedic culture and its establishment in 21st century. Then he needs to accept that in SB 4.12.32, purport SP prohibits women from becoming diksa-guru.

Moreover, Bhagavatam is specifically meant for kaliyuga. In SB 4.12.32 there is no reason why someone would write about diksa and siksa-gurus in the purport; there is no context. Still SP mentioned that. This certainly shows something.

It is NOT Guru OR Sadhu OR Sastra---- any one of these

It is Guru AND Sadhu AND Sastra --- all of them should match. Then only our speculation is negated. This is check and balance method.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,



damodara das

## Introduction to Muralidhar Bhattar

*Pradhāna arcaka, Sri Ranganatha Temple, Sri-rangam, Tamilnadu, India*

When Lord Caitanya went to Srirangam he stayed at the house of Venkata Bhattar. Venkata had a brother named Tirumalla Bhattar; Muralidhar Bhattar is his descendant. Muralidhar's family home came to be known as "Mahaprabhu Sadanam" because of Gaurangadeva's stay there.

In the early and mid 1970s ISKCON devotees (Acyutananda Swami, Yashodanandana Swami, Bhanu Swami and others) stayed at the home of the head archaka (pujari) of Srirangam, Sriman Rangaraja Bhattar, the father of Muralidhar Bhattar, hence Muralidhar has been friends with ISKCON since his teens.

In those days (mid 1970s) there was a lot of criticism in India that ISKCON was not bonafide. To remedy that Rangaraja Bhattar wrote an open letter of behalf of the Sri Sampradaya (Srirangam is the chief divyadeshm of the Sri Sampradaya and he was head priest) stating that "ISKCON is bonafide" and a member of one of the four recognized Vaisnava Sampradayas. ISKCON BBT had that letter printed in the 10s of thousands and it was widely distributed by our preachers. This was a major favourable turning point for ISKCON's preaching especially in South India.

His family has also watched over the Jagannatha temple across from their home and for generations they have welcomed Gaudiya vaisnavas who have come from all over India and now from all over the world on holy pilgrimage to the places where Lord Caitanya had His pastimes in Srirangam.

Muralidhar Prabhu jokingly says that he is half Gaudiya and half Sri and every year he does special aradhana for Lord Caitanya on Gaura Purnima. His wife, Srimati Ramamani devi, has even gone with local ISKCON devotees for the Brajamandala Parikrama. He has worked with ISKCON on several cooperative projects especially at the Goparbhatti temple that he excavated and rebuilt. An ISKCON devotee is on the board of trustees of that temple and several ISKCON devotees have helped manage it. Thus Muralidhar Bhattar and his family have a long history of sincere affection and friendship toward ISKCON and the Gaudiya sampradaya.

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Wed, Feb 6, 2019 at 2:47 PM



**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha



Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Slight, but important, correction. Srila Prabhupada never selected eleven guru's to succeed him. That is revisionist history. During the 1980 meeting at the Pyramid House in Topanga, HH Tamal Krishna Goswami categorically rejected the idea that Prabhupada appointed anyone to be diksha guru in Iskcon (<http://www.iskcon-truth.com/tamal-admission-topanga.html>). In 1977-8, a cabal of GBC's interpreted that Prabhupada's naming of ritvik guru's was the same as appointing them - and they alone - as "regular" guru's which was then again interpreted to mean giving diksha. The definition of "regular" has never had universal agreement. It is not otherwise defined by Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada's previous instructions on who was qualified to be guru were ignored. His idea of passing tests, the carefully referenced standards of qualifications, the historical examples of what happened to the Gaudiya math's misapplication of BSST's instructions, etc. were not taken into account in the rush to divide and conquer the world by the self-appointing eleven acharyas. The rest of the godbrothers ( god sisters were not even on the radar) would have to wait. Devotees who disagreed, such as Pradhyumna and others, were either kicked out or left out of disgust. Others formed their own samages. Thus began the growth of the "guru authorization non-objection, call-it-what-you-may" system. In the early 80's, there was a lot of pressure brought by godbrothers to be included in the guru list. Gradually, others like BCS, GKG, etc. were "added." It has brought us to today when the GBC is the arbiter of who and which gender can or cannot be labeled a diksha guru in Iskcon. To say that Prabhupada

appointed successors is simply not accurate.

Note: I am not faulting my dear godbrothers for their actions. The departure of the pure devotee seems to always bring about tumultuous upheavals. I have no doubt that they were doing the best that they knew how to do. However, the truth of how the guru succession occurred should not be whitewashed, nor should Srila Prabhupada's reputation carry the onus of having appointed those eleven successors. Someday I hope to have the time and intelligence to write a play about what when on in the incense filled corridors and rooms that led to the guru tattva decisions at that time.

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Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 6:17 AM



**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Opps. BPVS noticed that I cited a ritvik website as a reference. I didn't read down that far. I was just looking for the quote from TKG. My bad. By the way, riviks make the mistake of taking one quote of Srila Prabhupada to justify their position without weighing everything else that he wrote, said, and did - especially in reference to shastras. I believe that we have to look at the big picture of SP's instructions as we have been doing in this conference. Only then will the correct answer become obvious.

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Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 10:42 AM

**[Krishna Kirti Das](#)**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>,  
Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Visakha

Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Dear Nrsimhananda Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 6:17 AM David Shapiro <[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

Opps. BPVS noticed that I cited a ritvik website as a reference. I didn't read down that far. I was just looking for the quote from TKG. My bad. By the way, riviks make the mistake of taking one quote of Srila Prabhupada to justify their position without weighing everything else that he wrote, said, and did - especially in reference to shastras. I believe that we have to look at the big picture of SP's instructions as we have been doing in this conference. Only then will the correct answer become obvious.

This is precisely our criticism of the pro-FDG side of this debate. They take the Jan 3 letter to Hamsaduta as if it were the only evidence, not considering what else Srila Prabhupada said on the issue of female diksa-gurus, what to speak of not considering what our acharyas and our shastras say.

Basically, those in favor of FDG have said, "This letter of Jan 3 1969 is our evidence, and whatever else he might have said against it doesn't really count." But that's *exactly* how the ritviks argued their case. They said, "This letter of July 9 1977 is our evidence, and whatever else he might have said against it doesn't really count." The hermeneutical approach used by both is, fundamentally, highly selective. It is an extensive


exercise in cherry-picking. And therefore the conclusions reached by both are unauthorized.

Our main objection to the pro-FDG position, as with the ritvik position, is that its hermeneutical method is faulty and not in line with the method that Srila Prabhupada taught us. It delivers only the cherry-picked words of guru, and perhaps some sadhu and shastra--also cherry-picked IF they support the conclusion already reached. The ritviks use the exact same method.

So, the big difference between our sides on this matter is that the pro-FDG camp relies on cherry-picking its evidence. We don't. That's the fundamental difference.

Therefore in the papers we have presented thus far, we have gone to great lengths to explain what is our method and why it is authorized. Please see the attached paper. (I am not sure if we have sent it before, but if not, here it is.) This link goes to our web page, where all our papers can be downloaded: [https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page\\_id=826](https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page_id=826)

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

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Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 12:13 PM

[Bhakti Rasayana Sagar](#)

<brss108@gmail.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi



<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha  
Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS  
(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
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Dear devotees. Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

I thought of the scriptural reference which could serve as a common ground to for both parties, since the anti-VDG group is insisting that the VDG candidate must be at least on the bhāva platform. This is a well-known passage from NOD 18 on the subject:

“Rūpa Gosvāmī next describes the characteristics of a person

who has actually developed his ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. The characteristics are as follows:

1. He is always anxious to utilize his time in the devotional service of the Lord. He does not like to be idle. He wants service always, twenty-four hours a day, without deviation.
2. He is always reserved and perseverant.
3. He is always detached from all material attraction.
4. He does not long for any material respect in return for his activities.
5. He is always certain that Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy upon him.
6. He is always very eager to serve the Lord faithfully.
7. He is very much attached to the chanting of the holy names of the Lord.
8. He is always eager to describe the transcendental qualities of the Lord.
9. He is very pleased to live in a place where the Lord's pastimes are performed, e.g., Mathurā, Vṛndāvana or Dvārakā.”

Can we agree that the VDG candidates should be accepted by the GBC on this basis?

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

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Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 4:50 PM

**Bob Cohen**

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham



<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha  
Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS  
(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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I vote yes in the straw vote

To me the argument is simple and does not need much word jugglery. One senior swami has described analyzed brilliantly: If a person receives a mantra from a bona fide guru, he or she is, as a 'carrier' of the mantra, potentially able to give the mantra to another person. If half the population of the world are deemed unqualified to give a mantra because of their gender, it would imply that they would of necessity be deemed not qualified to receive it. Conversely, if qualified to receive mantra (as Srila Prabhupada ever so clearly determined), then women can be qualified to give mantra.

From another angle (if slightly far-fetched): It would also seem reasonable that if one considers it 'adharma' for women to give mantra, considering the crying need for spreading KC in the world today, we can understand that on the basis of 'apaddharma' (dharma in unusual, troubled circumstances), the option could be accepted that women could give mantra.

Ys

bt

**From:** Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, February 7, 2019 12:13 AM

**To:** David Shapiro <[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>

**Cc:** Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>;

Krishnarupa Dasi <[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>; Visakha

Dasi <[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)>; Carl Woodham

<[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>; Mahatma Das

<[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>; Pancaratna Dasa

<[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>; Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>; Rukmini Walker

<[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)>; Prabhupada dasa b.

<[pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com)>; Narahari

<[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com)>; Richard Hall

<[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com)>; Ajita Cozzi <[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com)>;

Atmanivedana Swami <[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net)>;

BB Keshava Swami <[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com)>; Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com)>; BDDS (Bhakti

Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)

<[BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net)>; Chris Ostrowski

<[chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com)>; Dhruva Kusa Shah

<[dhruva.k.108@gmail.com](mailto:dhruva.k.108@gmail.com)>; Divya Priya

<[divyajps@yahoo.com](mailto:divyajps@yahoo.com)>; Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA) <[Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net)>; Kratu Das

<[Kratudas108@yahoo.com](mailto:Kratudas108@yahoo.com)>; Madhuri Pura Dasa

<[mpd.vda@gmail.com](mailto:mpd.vda@gmail.com)>; Mahaman (das) ACBSP

<[Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net)>; Mahatma Das

<[mahatmadasa@gmail.com](mailto:mahatmadasa@gmail.com)>; rucira dasi

<[ruciradasi@gmail.com](mailto:ruciradasi@gmail.com)>; ??? <[siddha\\_007@163.com](mailto:siddha_007@163.com)>; janavi

devi <[janavidevi@hotmail.com](mailto:janavidevi@hotmail.com)>; Sri Oppecini <[sriradhita@gmail.com](mailto:sriradhita@gmail.com)>; Vrnda dd <[vrnda16@icloud.com](mailto:vrnda16@icloud.com)>; Bob Cohen <[bobcohen@ivs.edu](mailto:bobcohen@ivs.edu)>

**Subject:** Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion

Dear Nrsimhananda Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

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Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 8:25 PM

**David Shapiro**

<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>

To: Bob Cohen <[bobcohen@ivs.edu](mailto:bobcohen@ivs.edu)>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>, Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>, Visakha Dasi

<[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)>, Carl Woodham

<[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>, Mahatma Das

<[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>, Pancaratna Dasa

<[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>, Rukmini Walker

<[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<[pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com)>, Narahari

<[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com)>, Richard Hall

<[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com)>, Ajita Cozzi <[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com)>,

Atmanivedana Swami <[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net)>,

BB Keshava Swami <[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com)>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com)>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<[BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net)>, Chris Ostrowski

<[chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com)>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<[dhruva.k.108@gmail.com](mailto:dhruva.k.108@gmail.com)>, Divya Priya

<[divyajps@yahoo.com](mailto:divyajps@yahoo.com)>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <[Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net)>, Kratu Das

<[Kratudas108@yahoo.com](mailto:Kratudas108@yahoo.com)>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<[mpd.vda@gmail.com](mailto:mpd.vda@gmail.com)>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Newsflash: The Indian Bureau just finished its meetings in Pune. They voted unanimously to request the GBC to discuss the FDG/VDG issue with them before taking any vote.

(This reply adds Sati dd to the list of receivers. Somehow she got omitted. Reply to this email please, not the one that I posted just prior.)

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Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 10:36 AM



**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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I'm posting this reply by Gaura Keshava pr. in favor of VDG in response to Damodar 's and KK's latest posts:

I am sending this much now, but this is incomplete. I have much more that I am writing in response to the Anti-VDG malcontents.

Actually this is not a complex issue although some people want it to seem that way.

[UPPER CASE USED FOR EMPHASIS IN QUOTES BELOW, because bolding may be lost in sending emails through some servers]

{Any comments made by me within other quotes are placed within curly brackets}

WARNING: Beware of persons who tell you that we can understand what Srila Prabhupada wanted for his ISKCON society by quoting obscure sastras or by consulting Caste-by-birth-Conscious Vaisnavas.

arcye visnau sila-dhir gurusu nara-matir vaisnave jati-buddhir  
visnor va vaisnavanam kali-mala-mathane pada-tirthe 'mbu-buddhih  
sri-visnor namni mantre sakala-kalusa-he sabda-samanya-buddhir  
visnau sarvesvarese tad-itara-sama-dhir yasya va naraki sah

If one thinks that the worshipable salagrama-sila is a mere stone, that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being or that a pure Vaisnava preaching the bhakti cult all over the world is a member of a particular caste or material division of society, he is considered a naraki, a candidate for hellish life. CC Antya 6.294 (Quoted from Padma Purana)

N.B. Nara-matir means literally "[ordinary] person-mentality" if we consider a Vaisnava or Vaisnavi guru or teacher to be an ordinary human being that is a hellish mentality and Jati-buddhir means literally "birth-mentality" if we consider an aspect of a Vaisnavas or Vaisnavis material birth to be a disqualification, it is a hellish mentality. Females are also a material division of society.



The malcontents against VDGs (Vaisnavi Diksha Gurus) say that the above does not apply to those born female, it only applies to those born male. Thus they consider the qualification for being a Vaisnava Mantra Diksha guru to be dependent on a customary or social convention i.e. that only dvija born males can be diksha gurus.

Srila Prabhupada did not teach or agree to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those certain sastras which deal with hereditary, customary social or ecclesiastical conventions, as a basis for the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha Guru.

Srila Prabhupada did not accept that the qualification to be guru is based on customary hereditary, ecclesiastic or social considerations. He tells us this clearly in the section defining Guru Tattva in Caitanya Caritamrta (the first chapter of Adi Lila teaches Gaudiya Vaisnava Guru Tattva):

Sri Jiva Gosvami advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding. CC Adi 1.35 purport

Accepting a guru ONLY from a group of hereditary lines of dvija born male gurus is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from a customary social group i.e. only (dvija) males is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from an ecclesiastically approved group i.e. approved by a Church system (ecclesiastical convention means Church rules or GBC resolutions) is wrong as per this statement.

One may accept a guru from one of the above groups, but one must not think that only those who are hereditary gurus, male gurus or Church approved gurus are the ONLY spiritually qualified persons to be guru. If one does then as stated above in the Padma Purana, he has a hellish mentality.

We see things in a more spiritually egalitarian sastric way than the malcontents:

The first spiritual lesson that we are all taught when becoming Vaisnavas is "You are not this body". Spiritually we are all equal. Of course materially we are not equal. And Srila Prabhupada taught us in certain circumstances we have to consider these material differences. In his famous discussion about VDGs he says this:

Interview with Professors O'Connell, Motilal and Shivaram —  
June 18, 1976, Toronto

"Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same."

This objection that the anti-VDG malcontents have about the mixing of men and women is thus not applicable to the position of guru.

(And if they were so worried about men and women mixing due to VDGs they would

also be similarly worried about Sannyasis initiating young female disciples. But we see that they are hypocrites and don't consider that a VDG would perhaps be a better guru choice for a young female disciple than a Sannyasi. We, on the other hand, accept that a guru of any gender may have a disciple of any gender as long as they follow Srila Prabhupadas warnings about mixing of the genders i.e. "Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all.")

Our position is to emphasize the spiritual equality of all beings (and to only consider the material differences for ordinary mundane purposes and never spiritual ones).

vidya-vinaya-sampanne  
brahmane gavi hastini  
suni caiva sva-pake ca  
panditah sama-darsinah

The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]. Gita 5.18

One can object that elephants, cows, dogs and dog-eaters are all spiritually equal to a learned and gentle brahmana but they cannot be Vaisnava diksha gurus unless they know the science of Krsna Consciousness perfectly.

We agree.

That is why Lord Caitanya has given the spiritual definition of who can be a guru in Gaudiya Sampradaya:

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya  
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya

#### SYNONYMS

kiba—whether; vipra—a brahmana; kiba—whether; nyasi—a sannyasi; sudra—a sudra; kene—why; naya—not; yei—anyone who; krsna-tattva-vetta—a knower of the science of Krsna; sei—that person; guru—the spiritual master; haya—is.

#### TRANSLATION

"Whether one is a brahmana, a sannyasi or a sudra—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Krsna."

#### PURPORT

This verse is very important to the Krsna consciousness movement. In his Amrta-pravaha-bhasya, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that one should not think that because Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was born a brahmana and was situated in the topmost spiritual order as a sannyasi, it was improper for Him to receive instructions from Srila Ramananda Raya, who belonged to the sudra caste. To clarify this matter, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu informed Ramananda Raya that knowledge of Krsna consciousness is more important than caste. In the system of varnasrama-dharma there are various duties for the brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas and sudras. Actually the brahmana is supposed to be the spiritual master of all other varnas, or classes, but as far as Krsna consciousness is concerned, everyone is capable of becoming a spiritual master because knowledge in Krsna consciousness is on the platform of the spirit soul.



To spread Krsna consciousness, one need only be cognizant of the science of the spirit soul. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER ONE IS A BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA, VAISYA, SUDRA, SANNYASI, GRHASTHA OR WHATEVER. IF ONE SIMPLY UNDERSTANDS THIS SCIENCE, HE CAN BECOME A SPIRITUAL MASTER.

It is stated in the Hari-bhakti-vilasa that one should not accept initiation from a person who is not in the brahminical order if there is a fit person in the brahminical order present. This instruction is meant for those who are overly dependent on the mundane social order and is suitable for those who want to remain in mundane life. IF ONE UNDERSTANDS THE TRUTH OF KRSNA CONSCIOUSNESS AND SERIOUSLY DESIRES TO ATTAIN TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PERFECTION OF LIFE, HE CAN ACCEPT A SPIRITUAL MASTER FROM ANY SOCIAL STATUS, PROVIDED THE SPIRITUAL MASTER IS FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA. SRILA BHAKTISIDDHANTA SARASVATI THAKURA ALSO STATES THAT ALTHOUGH ONE IS SITUATED AS A BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA, VAISYA, SUDRA, BRAHMACARI, VANAPRASTHA, GRHASTHA OR SANNYASI, IF HE IS CONVERSANT IN THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA HE CAN BECOME A SPIRITUAL MASTER AS VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU, DIKSA-GURU OR SIKSA-GURU. The spiritual master who first gives information about spiritual life is called the vartma-pradarsaka-guru, the spiritual master who initiates according to the regulations of the sastras is called the diksa-guru, and the spiritual master who gives instructions for elevation is called the siksa-guru. FACTUALLY THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A SPIRITUAL MASTER DEPEND ON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA. It does not matter whether he is a brahmana, ksatriya, sannyasi or sudra. THIS INJUNCTION GIVEN BY SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU IS NOT AT ALL AGAINST THE INJUNCTIONS OF THE SASTRAS. In the Padma Purana it is said:

na sudra bhagavad-bhaktas te 'pi bhagavatottamah  
sarva-varnesu te sudra ye na bhakta janardane

One who is actually advanced in spiritual knowledge of Krsna is never a sudra, even though he may have been born in a sudra family. However, even if a vipra, or brahmana, is very expert in the six brahminical activities (pathana, pathana, yajana, yajana, dana, pratigraha) and is also well versed in the Vedic hymns, he cannot become a spiritual master unless he is a Vaisnava. But if one is born in the family of candalas yet is well versed in Krsna consciousness, he can become a guru. These are the sastric injunctions, and strictly following these injunctions, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, as a grhastha named Sri Visvambhara, was initiated by a sannyasi-guru named Isvara Puri. Similarly, Sri Nityananda Prabhu was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, a sannyasi. According to others, however, He was initiated by Laksmipati Tirtha. Advaita Acarya, although a grhastha, was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, and many devotees born in caste brahmana families were initiated by Sri Rasikananda (a disciple of Sri Syamananda Prabhu), although Rasikananda was not born in a brahmana family. There are many instances in which a born brahmana took initiation from a person who was not born in a brahmana family. The brahminical symptoms are explained in Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.11.35), wherein it is stated:

yasya yal-laksanam proktam pumso varnabhivyanjakam  
yad anyatrapa drsyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiset

If a person is born in a sudra family but has all the qualities of a spiritual master, he should be accepted not only as a brahmana but as a qualified spiritual master also. This is also the instruction of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura therefore introduced the sacred thread ceremony for all Vaisnavas according to the rules and regulations.

Sometimes a Vaisnava who is a bhajanandi does not take the savitra-samskara (sacred thread initiation) {SAVITRA-SAMSKARA MENTIONED HERE REFERS TO THE UPANAYANAM SAMSKARA BY WHICH THE GURU BRINGS THE DISCIPLE CLOSER FOR TEACHING, THE MAIN ELEMENT OF IT IS THE TEACHING OF THE VEDIC SAVITRI OR BRAHMA GAYATRI

MANTRA}, but this does not mean that this system should be used for preaching work. There are two kinds of Vaisnavas—bhajanandi and gosthy-anandi. A bhajanandi is not interested in preaching work, but a gosthy-anandi is interested in spreading Krsna consciousness to benefit the people and increase the number of Vaisnavas. A Vaisnava is understood to be above the position of a brahmana. As a preacher, he should be recognized as a brahmana; otherwise there may be a misunderstanding of his position as a Vaisnava. However, a Vaisnava brahmana is not selected on the basis of his birth but according to his qualities. Unfortunately, those who are unintelligent do not know the difference between a brahmana and a Vaisnava. They are under the impression that unless one is a brahmana he cannot be a spiritual master. For this reason only, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu makes the statement in this verse:

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya  
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya  
[Cc. Madhya 8.128]

If one becomes a guru, he is automatically a brahmana. SOMETIMES A CASTE GURU {OR AN ANTI-VDG MALCONTENT} SAYS THAT YE KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA, SEI GURU HAYA MEANS THAT ONE WHO IS NOT A BRAHMANA MAY BECOME A SIKSA-GURU OR A VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU BUT NOT AN INITIATOR GURU. ACCORDING to such caste gurus, birth and family ties are considered foremost. However, the hereditary consideration is not acceptable to Vaisnavas. THE WORD GURU IS EQUALLY APPLICABLE TO THE VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU, SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU. UNLESS WE ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE ENUNCIATED BY SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU, THIS KRSNA CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT CANNOT SPREAD ALL OVER THE WORLD. According to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's intentions, prthivite ache yata nagaradi-grama sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama. [CB Antya-khanda 4.126] Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's cult must be preached all over the world. This does not mean that people should take to His teachings and remain sudras or candalas. As soon as one is trained as a pure Vaisnava, he must be accepted as a bona fide brahmana. This is the essence of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's instructions in this verse. CC Mad 8.128

But one may counter that not all vartma-pradarsaka-guru or patha-pradarsaka-guru, siksa-gurus are qualified to be diksa gurus.

We agree also with this. Those that are not qualified are not "YEI KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA" OR "KNOW[ER]S [OF] THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA [FULLY]. Another aspect that a mantra diksa guru has to possess is he or she has to be himself or herself initiated into the Vaisnava mantras that they will give to others. One cannot initiate another into a mantra that one is not himself or herself initiated into. That is a given.

So let us look at two examples of Vaisnavi vartma-pradarsaka-gurus or patha-pradarsaka-gurus who were not qualified to give diksha. Let us see why.

1. Suniti the mother of Dhruva maharaja.

sa ca svarlokam aroksyan  
sunitim jananim dhruvah  
anvasmarad agam hitva  
dinam yasye tri-vistapam

Dhruva was seated in the transcendental airplane, which was just about to start, when he remembered his poor mother, Suniti. He thought to himself, "How shall I go alone to the Vaikuntha planet and leave behind my poor mother?"

PURPORT

Dhruva had a feeling of obligation to his mother, Suniti. It was Suniti who HAD GIVEN HIM THE CLUE WHICH HAD NOW ENABLED HIM TO BE PERSONALLY CARRIED TO THE VAIKUNTHA PLANET BY THE ASSOCIATES OF LORD VISNU. He now remembered her and wanted to take her with him. ACTUALLY, DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S MOTHER, SUNITI, WAS HIS PATHA-PRADARSAKA-GURU. PATHA-PRADARSAKA-GURU MEANS "THE GURU, OR THE SPIRITUAL MASTER, WHO SHOWS THE WAY." Such a guru is sometimes called siksa-guru. ALTHOUGH NARADA MUNI WAS HIS DIKSA-GURU (INITIATING SPIRITUAL MASTER), SUNITI, HIS MOTHER, WAS THE FIRST WHO GAVE HIM INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THE FAVOR OF THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD. It is the duty of the siksa-guru or diksa-guru to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. ACCORDING TO SASTRIC INJUNCTIONS, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU, AND GENERALLY THE SIKSA-GURU LATER ON BECOMES THE DIKSA-GURU. SUNITI, HOWEVER, BEING A WOMAN, AND SPECIFICALLY HIS MOTHER, COULD NOT BECOME DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S DIKSA-GURU. Still, he was not less obliged to Suniti. There was no question of carrying Narada Muni to Vaikunthaloka, but Dhruva Maharaja thought of his mother.

Whatever plan the Supreme Personality of Godhead contemplates immediately fructifies. Similarly, a devotee who is completely dependent on the Supreme Lord can also fulfill his wishes by the grace of the Lord. The Lord fulfills His wishes independently, but a devotee fulfills his wishes simply by being dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore as soon as Dhruva Maharaja thought of his poor mother, he was assured by the associates of Visnu that Suniti was also going to Vaikunthaloka, in another plane. Dhruva Maharaja had thought that he was going alone to Vaikunthaloka, leaving behind his mother, which was not very auspicious because people would criticize him for going alone to Vaikunthaloka and not carrying with him Suniti, who had given him so much. But Dhruva also considered that he was not personally the Supreme. Therefore, if Krsna fulfilled his desires, only then would it be possible. Krsna could immediately understand his mind, and He told Dhruva that his mother was also going with him. This incident proves that a pure devotee like Dhruva Maharaja can fulfill all his desires; by the grace of the Lord, he becomes exactly like the Lord, and thus whenever he thinks of anything, his wish is immediately fulfilled. SB 3.12.32

{Note above that Suniti "HAD GIVEN HIM THE CLUE WHICH HAD NOW ENABLED HIM TO BE PERSONALLY CARRIED TO THE VAIKUNTHA PLANET BY THE ASSOCIATES OF LORD VISNU", she had not given him more than a clue by telling him to go to the forest, and perform austerities (meditation was the yuga dharma) for pleasing Lord Visnu. "ALTHOUGH NARADA MUNI WAS HIS DIKSA-GURU (INITIATING SPIRITUAL MASTER), SUNITI, HIS MOTHER, WAS THE FIRST WHO GAVE HIM INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THE FAVOR OF THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD." "ACCORDING TO SASTRIC INJUNCTIONS, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU, AND GENERALLY THE SIKSA-GURU LATER ON BECOMES THE DIKSA-GURU. The fact is that Suniti advise to Dhruva was incomplete, because she although she advised him to go to the forest, perform austerities and meditate on Lord Visnu she did not give him the mantra by which to meditate on Lord Visnu. WHY? Anti-VDG malcontents make much of the next sentence in the purport. They try to use it to apply to all women and all mothers. However there are many reasons why this is not so. Let us examine the facts. SUNITI, HOWEVER, BEING A WOMAN, AND SPECIFICALLY HIS MOTHER, COULD NOT BECOME DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S DIKSA-GURU." They say that Suniti could not be Dhruvas diksha guru because she was a woman and specifically his mother. Yes, we agree. But this is not the full explanation. In the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society that Suniti and Dhruva lived during Satya Yuga women did not take initiation at all. It was considered enough for them to follow the directions of their husband who was seen as their pati-guru. So, yes we agree that in the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society and in Satya Yuga women and mothers could not be diksha gurus. They were not initiated and so they were unable to transmit a mantra which they were never initiated into themselves. Let us see the next verse and purport and see if Srila Prabhupada addresses this point.}

iti vyavasitam tasya  
vyavasaya surottamau  
darsayam asatur devim  
puro yanena gacchatim

The great associates of Vaikunthaloka, Nanda and Sunanda, could understand the mind of Dhruva Maharaja, and thus they showed him that his mother, Suniti, was going forward in another plane.

#### PURPORT

This incident proves that the siksa- or diksa-guru who has a disciple who strongly executes devotional service like Dhruva Maharaja can be carried by the disciple even though the instructor is not as advanced. ALTHOUGH SUNITI WAS AN INSTRUCTOR TO DHRUVA MAHARAJA, SHE COULD NOT GO TO THE FOREST BECAUSE SHE WAS A WOMAN, NOR COULD SHE EXECUTE AUSTERITIES AND PENANCES AS DHRUVA MAHARAJA DID. Still, Dhruva Maharaja was able to take his mother with him. Similarly, Prahlada Maharaja also delivered his atheistic father, Hiranyakasipu. THE CONCLUSION IS THAT A DISCIPLE OR AN OFFSPRING WHO IS A VERY STRONG DEVOTEE CAN CARRY WITH HIM TO VAIKUNTHALOKA EITHER HIS FATHER, MOTHER OR SIKSA- OR DIKSA-GURU. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura used to say, "If I could perfectly deliver even one soul back home, back to Godhead, I would think my mission—propagating Krsna consciousness—to be successful." The Krsna consciousness movement is spreading now all over the world, and sometimes I think that even though I am crippled in many ways, if one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Maharaja, then he will be able to carry me with him to Vaikunthaloka. SB 3.12.33

{ALTHOUGH SUNITI WAS AN INSTRUCTOR TO DHRUVA MAHARAJA, SHE COULD NOT GO TO THE FOREST BECAUSE SHE WAS A WOMAN, NOR COULD SHE EXECUTE AUSTERITIES AND PENANCES

AS DHRUVA MAHARAJA DID. So Suniti because she was a woman could not go to the forest, could not execute austerities and penances, thus she could not perform the yuga dharma of Satya Yuga. How then could she go back to Godhead. Simple. In Satya Yuga a woman could go back to Godhead by following the path of her pati-guru or in this case being picked up by her perfected son. She was not initiated because the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society she lived in expected her to simply follow her husband as pati-guru and not to take initiation herself or go to the forest and perform austerities and penances. "THE CONCLUSION IS THAT A DISCIPLE OR AN OFFSPRING WHO IS A VERY STRONG DEVOTEE CAN CARRY WITH HIM TO VAIKUNTHALOKA EITHER HIS FATHER, MOTHER OR SIKSA- OR DIKSA-GURU." So women in the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society of Satya Yuga could attain Vaikuntha either by following their husbands path i.e. pati-guru, or by having a siksha disciple like Dhruva maharaja who became perfected by going to the forest, performing austerities and penances and practicing meditation on the mantra given by his diksha guru Narada Muni. But women in that time and circumstance could not give mantra diksha because they had never taken mantra diksha neither could they go to the forest and perform the austerities, penances and meditation.

Today however in ISKCON the situation is completely different. The Yuga Dharma is Harinama Sankirtana which does not require one to go to the forest and perform austerities and penances, nor long bouts of meditation. The Hare Krishna Mahamantra although it is a Vaidic mantra (from Kalisantarayopanisad) was freely given to every man and woman regardless of their high or low births by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. This despite the Caste-by-birth conscious Brahmins of Navadvipa objecting to this. Not only that but all the diksha mantras given to men are also given to women including the Savitri (Brahma) gayatri. Women and men are thus equally initiated in ISKCON and can and do both perform Brahminical duties like deity worship which are according to Caste-by-birth Varnashrama ONLY allowed for males born in dvija (Brahmin, Ksatriya and

Vaisya) families. So how is this the same circumstance as Suniti who was living in a Caste-by-birth society in Satya Yuga? Answer: It is not the same circumstances and therefore the example of Suniti not being a diksha guru is not applicable to ISKCON today.

So regarding Krishna Dharmas email:

Will it be a "calamity"? So far every time the GBC tries to interfere in the natural sastric system it seems there are calamities. In this case we have at least one proposed VDG (Vaisnavi Diksha Guru i.e. Urmila devi dasi) who is traveling around the world arguably preaching much more than many male devotees and attracting sincere persons who have gained faith in her and are waiting years to take diksha from her. It's been decades since the GBC passed resolutions accepting VDGs. And justice delayed is justice denied.

I agree with Krishna Dharma prabhu. Who's business is it anyway? If all persons involved are following the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, 4 regs and 16 rounds and are loyal to ISKCON, what business is it of a few malcontents who want to interfere? Let them concentrate on their own spiritual lives which are not effected in the least by VDGs initiating in ISKCON. If VDGs are so bad then everyone will see that and no one will gain faith in them and want to take diksha from them.

The very same sastric references given by the malcontents to show that women cannot be gurus also state that sudra born or mlecca born (antya-ja, lit. of other birth) are also rejected. Why do the malcontents ONLY care about opposing women gurus, their quotes also declare that no person born a sudra or mlecca can also be guru. They are nothing but hypocrites. This is called ardhha kukuta nyaya. Or accepting only half the hen i.e. the part that lays eggs, but not feeding the other end. The fact is that accepting quotes that deny women the possibility to be diksha gurus means also automatically denying men not born in dvija families also (practically all present ISKCON gurus, is there even any ISKCON guru born in a brahmin family?)

Obviously the GBC cannot accept their sastric quotes AS IS, because to do so would mean they have to accept only gurus born in brahmin (dvija i.e. brahmin, ksatriya or vaisya) families. LOL!

Therefore the malcontents MOVE THE GOAL POSTS. They assume that sudra and mlecca born males can be elevated to be qualified to give Vaisnava diksha by themselves taking Vaisnava diksha, but they deny that brahmin, ksatriya, vaisya, or sudra or mlecca born women can similarly be elevated to be qualified to give Vaisnava diksha by taking Vaisnava diksha. Did Srila Prabhupada even say such a thing? NO, never. In fact he said the exact opposite. The malcontents normally do not quote the full context when Srila Prabhupada makes these statements. They take very minimal quotations and present them as a SMOKE SCREEN so that people do not understand the full purport of his statements, for example:

Interview with Professors O'Connell, Motilal and Shivaram —  
June 18, 1976, Toronto

OF COURSE, BECAUSE SUPERFICIALLY, BODILY, THERE IS SOME DISTINCTION, SO WE KEEP WOMEN SEPARATELY FROM MEN, THAT'S ALL. OTHERWISE, THE RIGHTS ARE THE SAME...IF SHE IS ABLE TO GO TO THE HIGHEST PERFECTION OF LIFE, WHY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BECOME GURU? BUT, NOT SO MANY. ACTUALLY ONE WHO HAS ATTAINED THE PERFECTION, SHE CAN BECOME GURU. BUT MAN OR WOMAN, UNLESS ONE HAS ATTAINED THE



PERFECTION... YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA. SEI GURU HAYA [CC. MADHYA 8.128]. THE QUALIFICATION OF GURU IS THAT HE MUST BE FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE SCIENCE OF KR.S.N.A. THEN HE OR SHE CAN BECOME GURU. YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA., SEI GURU HAYA. [BREAK] IN OUR MATERIAL WORLD, IS IT ANY PROHIBITION THAT WOMAN CANNOT BECOME PROFESSOR? IF SHE IS QUALIFIED, SHE CAN BECOME PROFESSOR. WHAT IS THE WRONG THERE? SHE MUST BE QUALIFIED. THAT IS THE POSITION. SO SIMILARLY, IF THE WOMAN UNDERSTANDS KR.S.N.A CONSCIOUSNESS PERFECTLY, SHE CAN BECOME GURU.

The malcontents only quote:

If she is able to go to the highest perfection of life, why it is not possible to become guru? But, not so many. Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru.

They leave out:

Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same.

and

But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection... Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kr.s.n.a. Then he or she can become guru. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta., sei guru haya. [break]

and

In our material world, is it any prohibition that woman cannot become professor? If she is qualified, she can become professor. What is the wrong there? She must be qualified. That is the position. So similarly, if the woman understands Kr.s.n.a consciousness perfectly, she can become guru.

Above I give the full quote so that everyone can understand that the purport of Srila Prabhupadas full statement is that the qualification for guru is EXACTLY THE SAME for men and women. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]

Next the malcontents MOVE THE GOAL POSTS AGAIN.

They then admit that women can be diksha gurus but ONLY if they have "seen God face to face"? And they get this from an obscure Pancaratra Samhita called Bharadvaja Samhita only quoted once (in the Vedabase) by Srila Prabhupada. Now we do not deny this is a bonafide sastra just as we do not deny that Manu Samhita is a bonafide sastra (which Srila Prabhupada called the Law book of Mankind and is quoted hundreds of times in the Vedabase). But what we do deny is that Srila Prabhupada wanted to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those sastras as a basis for the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha Guru.

Srila Prabhupada did not accept that the qualification to be guru is based on customary hereditary, ecclesiastic or social considerations. He tells us this clearly in the section defining Guru Tattva in Caitanya Caritamrta (the first chapter of Adi Lila teaches Gaudiya Vaisnava Guru Tattva):

SRI JIVA GOSVAMI ADVISES THAT ONE NOT ACCEPT A SPIRITUAL MASTER IN TERMS OF HEREDITARY OR CUSTOMARY SOCIAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL CONVENTIONS. ONE SHOULD SIMPLY TRY TO FIND A GENUINELY QUALIFIED SPIRITUAL MASTER FOR ACTUAL

ADVANCEMENT IN SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. CC Adi 1.35 purport

dasan

GKD

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Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 4:09 PM

 [David Shapiro](#)

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi

devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini



<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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A Sabha member reminded me that the Indian Bureau had threatened a few years ago to split from Iskcon if there were VDG's permitted by the GBC. He said that some Sabha members were intimidated by the idea that Iskcon may fracture. I had no thought that such a danger was still existing. I confirmed today that it is not. An anti- FDG Bureau member informed me that whatever is decided, the Bureau will cooperate with the GBC. They only voted to request discussion on the VDG issue with the GBC before a vote. I posted the "news" because it vividly shows that our deliberations are hardly for nought. The collective comments and decision of the Sabha have the potential to be influential. Many Sabha members have yet to be heard from on this subject. I am trying to ignite some wider participation. I also have been posting Gaura Keshava's rebuttals to Damodara pr. because there has been very little written by Visakha dd as a pro-VDG proponent. I personally send GKP the posts, and he kindly responds. I've tried to wear one hat as a fair arbiter on the issue and the other as a participant. The last thing that I want to do is politicize this issue. We are all truth-seekers at heart, and I'm convinced that laying bare our differences on the subject can lead to a synthesis if not in belief, then, at least, in purpose.

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Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 4:46 PM

**[Bhakti Rasayana Sagar](#)**

<brss108@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Thank you, Nrsimhananda Prabhu. I'm quite sure that all of us do appreciate your balanced approach and neutral stand, despite of your position on the issue. And the fact that the Indian Bureau changed its radical stand is a good sign of maturity of the leaders. I agree that it would be nice to get feedback from the inactive SABHA members, but my suspicion is that they think "it will get sorted without me". In any case we should have face to face quite soon and then can decide our policy on the habitual abstainers.

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

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Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 5:17 PM



**BB Keshava Swami**

<bbks108@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Das SABHA

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker SABHA

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris

Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa

Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Mahaman Das SABHA

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi

devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,

Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Hare Krishna!

Dear SABHA members,

please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Srila Prabhupad!

I am grateful to all of you for a comprehensive discussion of this topic. Also a big thanks to you, Nrisimhananda Prabhu, for your mature leadership of our group.

As for this issue of VDG, I have not studied this topic before, because in the Russian-speaking countries that I represent here this topic is not yet relevant. It was very useful for me to read all the arguments of different sides about this topic. I can't say that some kind of unequivocal belief has formed within me on this issue. For me need more time to think about it. However, the previous decision of the GBC to allow qualified Vaisnavis to give the first initiation seems to me to be reasonably balanced and at the moment I am ready to support it.

Your servant, BB Keshava Swami

8 февр. 2019 г., в 14:16, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> написал(а):

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Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 6:47 PM

[Mahatma Das](#)

<[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>

To: [brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com), [krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)

Cc: [nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com), [damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com),

krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu

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On Thursday, February 7, 2019 Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear devotees. Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

I thought of the scriptural reference which could serve as a common ground to for both parties, since the anti-VDG group is insisting that the VDG candidate must be at least on the bhāva platform. This is a well-known passage from NOD 18 on the subject:

“Rūpa Gosvāmī next describes the characteristics of a person who has actually developed his ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. The characteristics are as follows:

1. He is always anxious to utilize his time in the devotional service of the Lord. He does not like to be idle. He wants service always, twenty-four hours a day, without deviation.
2. He is always reserved and perseverant.
3. He is always detached from all material attraction.

4. He does not long for any material respect in return for his activities.
5. He is always certain that Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy upon him.
6. He is always very eager to serve the Lord faithfully.
7. He is very much attached to the chanting of the holy names of the Lord.
8. He is always eager to describe the transcendental qualities of the Lord.
9. He is very pleased to live in a place where the Lord's pastimes are performed, e.g., Mathurā, Vṛndāvana or Dvārakā.”

Can we agree that the VDG candidates should be accepted by the GBC on this basis?

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

On 7 Feb 2019, at 10:42, Krishna Kirti Das  
<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Nrsimhananda Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 6:17 AM David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

Opps. BPVS noticed that I cited a ritvik website as a reference. I didn't read down that far. I was just looking for the quote from TKG. My bad. By the way, riviks make the mistake of taking one quote of Srila Prabhupada to justify their position without weighing everything else that he wrote, said, and did - especially in reference to shastras. I believe that we have to look at the big picture of SP's instructions as we have been doing in this conference. Only then will the correct answer become obvious.

This is precisely our criticism of the pro-FDG side of



this debate. They take the Jan 3 letter to Hamsaduta as it if were the only evidence, not considering what else Srila Prabhupada said on the issue of female diksa-gurus, what to speak of not considering what our acharyas and our shastras say.

Basically, those in favor of FDG have said, "This letter of Jan 3 1969 is our evidence, and whatever else he might have said against it doesn't really count." But that's *exactly* how the ritviks argued their case. They said, "This letter of July 9 1977 is our evidence, and whatever else he might have said against it doesn't really count." The hermeneutical approach used by both is, fundamentally, highly selective. It is an extensive exercise in cherry-picking. And therefore the conclusions reached by both are unauthorized.

Our main objection to the pro-FDG position, as with the ritvik position, is that its hermeneutical method is faulty and not in line with the method that Srila Prabhupada taught us. It delivers only the cherry-picked words of guru, and perhaps some sadhu and shastra--also cherry-picked IF they support the conclusion already reached. The ritviks use the exact same method.

So, the big difference between our sides on this matter is that the pro-FDG camp relies on cherry-picking its evidence. We don't. That's the fundamental difference.

Therefore in the papers we have presented thus far, we have gone to great lengths to explain what is our method and why it is authorized. Please see the attached paper. (I am not sure if we have sent it before, but if not, here it is.) This link goes to our web page, where all our papers can be downloaded: [https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page\\_id=826](https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page_id=826)



Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

<harinam\_diksa\_and\_fdg final.pdf>

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🕒 Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 10:15 PM



**Visakha Dasi**

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>

To: Nrsimhananda das David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Brahmatirtha Das <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Kalakantha

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Devi Dasi

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das

<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi

devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Regarding my participation, I offer these points:

1. As Gaura Keshava Prabhu mentioned, the issue is not complex. The anti-FDG members are making it appear complex and taking a tremendous amount of their time and our time in doing so.
2. Why do we need to turn to the standards of the Sri Sampradaya? Whatever their standard may be, it is not our sampradaya. Answers to this question are found in our sampradaya.
3. The power of bhakti supersedes all material disqualifications. That is why in the world today we have former mlecchas — meat eaters — who are initiating people into the Brahma Madhva Gaudiya sampradaya. And this power of bhakti can be present regardless of one's body. From Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.7.46:

"Surrendered souls, even from groups leading sinful lives, such as women, the laborer class, the mountaineers and the Sabaras, or even the birds and beasts, can also know about the science of Godhead and become liberated from the clutches of the illusory energy by surrendering unto the pure devotees of the Lord and by following in their footsteps in devotional service."

4. There is no indication from Srila Prabhupada teachings that the qualifications of those who initiate is different for men than for women. In fact, the opposite. The indications are that the qualifications are the same for both, as stated in Caitanya-caritamrita Madhya 18.121-122:

strī-bāla-vṛddha, āra 'caṇḍāla' 'yavana'

yei tomāra eka-bāra pāya daraśana  
kṛṣṇa-nāma laya, nāce hañā unmatta  
ācārya ha-ila sei, tārila jagata

#### SYNONYMS

strī—women; bāla—children; vṛddha—old men; āra—and; caṇḍāla—  
—the lowest of men; yavana—persons who eat meat; yei—anyone  
who; tomāra—Your; eka-bāra—once; pāya daraśana—gets the  
sight; kṛṣṇa-nāma—the holy name of Kṛṣṇa; laya—chants; nāce—  
dances; hañā unmatta—like a madman; ācārya ha-ila—becomes a  
spiritual master; sei—that man; tārila jagata—delivers the whole  
world.

#### TRANSLATION

"If they see You just once, even women, children, old men, meat-  
eaters and members of the lowest caste immediately chant the holy  
name of Kṛṣṇa, dance like madmen and become spiritual masters  
capable of delivering the whole world."

For further information and references, this paper is well  
researched and thorough:

your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

On Feb 8, 2019, at 5:39 AM, David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

A Sabha member reminded me that the Indian Bureau had threatened  
a few years ago to split from Iskcon if there were VDG's permitted by  
the GBC. He said that some Sabha members were intimidated by the  
idea that Iskcon may fracture. I had no thought that such a danger  
was still existing. I confirmed today that it is not. An anti- FDG Bureau  
member informed me that whatever is decided, the Bureau will

cooperate with the GBC. They only voted to request discussion on the VDG issue with the GBC before a vote. I posted the "news" because it vividly shows that our deliberations are hardly for nought. The collective comments and decision of the Sabha have the potential to be influential. Many Sabha members have yet to be heard from on this subject. I am trying to ignite some wider participation. I also have been posting Gaura Keshava's rebuttals to Damodara pr. because there has been very little written by Visakha dd as a pro-VDG proponent. I personally send GKP the posts, and he kindly responds. I've tried to wear one hat as a fair arbiter on the issue and the other as a participant. The last thing that I want to do is politicize this issue. We are all truth-seekers at heart, and I'm convinced that laying bare our differences on the subject can lead to a synthesis if not in belief, then, at least, in purpose.

On Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 10:36 AM David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

I'm posting this reply by Gaura Keshava pr. in favor of VDG in response to Damodar 's and KK's latest posts:

I am sending this much now, but this is incomplete. I have much more that I am writing in response to the Anti-VDG malcontents.

Actually this is not a complex issue although some people want it to seem that way.

[UPPER CASE USED FOR EMPHASIS IN QUOTES BELOW, because bolding may be lost in sending emails through some servers]

{Any comments made by me within other quotes are placed within curly brackets}

WARNING: Beware of persons who tell you that we can understand what Srila Prabhupada wanted for his ISKCON society by quoting obscure sastras or by consulting Caste-by-birth-Conscious Vaisnavas.

arcye visnau sila-dhir gurusu nara-matir vaisnave jati-buddhir  
visnor va vaisnavanam kali-mala-mathane pada-tirthhe 'mbu-buddhih  
sri-visnor namni mantre sakala-kalusa-he sabda-samanya-buddhir  
visnau sarvesvarese tad-itara-sama-dhir yasya va naraki sah

If one thinks that the worshipable salagrama-sila is a mere stone, that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being or that a pure Vaisnava preaching the bhakti cult all over the world is a member of a particular caste or material division of society, he is considered a naraki, a candidate for hellish life. CC Antya 6.294 (Quoted from Padma Purana)

N.B. Nara-matir means literally "[ordinary] person-mentality" if we consider a Vaisnava or Vaisnavi guru or teacher to be an ordinary human being that is a hellish mentality and Jati-buddhir means literally "birth-mentality" if we consider an aspect of a Vaisnavas or Vaisnavis material birth to be a

disqualification, it is a hellish mentality. Females are also a material division of society.

The malcontents against VDGs (Vaisnavi Diksha Gurus) say that the above does not apply to those born female, it only applies to those born male. Thus they consider the qualification for being a Vaisnava Mantra Diksha guru to be dependent on a customary or social convention i.e. that only dvija born males can be diksha gurus.

Srila Prabhupada did not teach or agree to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those certain sastras which deal with hereditary, customary social or ecclesiastical conventions, as a basis for the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha Guru.

Srila Prabhupada did not accept that the qualification to be guru is based on customary hereditary, ecclesiastic or social considerations. He tells us this clearly in the section defining Guru Tattva in Caitanya Caritamrta (the first chapter of Adi Lila teaches Gaudiya Vaisnava Guru Tattva):

Sri Jiva Gosvami advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding. CC Adi 1.35 purport

Accepting a guru ONLY from a group of hereditary lines of dvija born male gurus is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from a customary social group i.e. only (dvija) males is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from an ecclesiastically approved group i.e. approved by a Church system (ecclesiastical convention means Church rules or GBC resolutions) is wrong as per this statement.

One may accept a guru from one of the above groups, but one must not think that only those who are hereditary gurus, male gurus or Church approved gurus are the ONLY spiritually qualified persons to be guru. If one does then as stated above in the Padma Purana, he has a hellish mentality.

We see things in a more spiritually egalitarian sastric way than the malcontents:

The first spiritual lesson that we are all taught when becoming Vaisnavas is "You are not this body". Spiritually we are all equal. Of course materially we are not equal. And Srila Prabhupada taught us in certain circumstances we have to consider these material differences. In his famous discussion about VDGs he says this:

Interview with Professors O'Connell, Motilal and Shivaram —  
June 18, 1976, Toronto

"Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same."

This objection that the anti-VDG malcontents have about the mixing of men and women is thus not applicable to the position of guru.

(And if they were so worried about men and women mixing due to VDGs they would also be similarly worried about Sannyasis initiating young female disciples. But we see that they are hypocrites and don't consider that a VDG would perhaps be a better guru choice for a young female disciple than a Sannyasi. We, on the other hand, accept that a guru of any gender may have a disciple of any gender as long as they follow Srila Prabhupadas warnings about mixing of the genders i.e. "Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all.")

Our position is to emphasize the spiritual equality of all beings (and to only consider the material differences for ordinary mundane purposes and never spiritual ones).

vidya-vinaya-sampanne  
brahmane gavi hastini  
suni caiva sva-pake ca  
panditah sama-darsinah

The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]. Gita 5.18

One can object that elephants, cows, dogs and dog-eaters are all spiritually equal to a learned and gentle brahmana but they cannot be Vaisnava diksha gurus unless they know the science of Krsna Consciousness perfectly.

We agree.

That is why Lord Caitanya has given the spiritual definition of who can be a guru in Gaudiya Sampradaya:

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya  
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya

#### SYNONYMS

kiba—whether; vipra—a brahmana; kiba—whether; nyasi—a sannyasi; sudra—a sudra; kene—why; naya—not; yei—anyone who; krsna-tattva-vetta—a knower of the science of Krsna; sei—that person; guru—the spiritual master; haya—is.

#### TRANSLATION

“Whether one is a brahmana, a sannyasi or a sudra—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Krsna.”

#### PURPORT

This verse is very important to the Krsna consciousness movement. In his Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya, Srīla Bhaktinodā Thākura explains that one should not think that because Srī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was born a brahmana and was situated in the topmost spiritual order as a sannyasi, it was improper for Him to receive instructions from Srīla Ramananda Raya, who belonged to the sudra caste. To clarify this matter, Srī Caitanya Mahāprabhu informed Ramananda Raya that knowledge of Krsna consciousness is more important than caste. In the system of varnasrama-dharma there are various duties for the brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas and sudras. Actually the brahmana is supposed to be the



spiritual master of all other varnas, or classes, but as far as Krsna consciousness is concerned, everyone is capable of becoming a spiritual master because knowledge in Krsna consciousness is on the platform of the spirit soul. To spread Krsna consciousness, one need only be cognizant of the science of the spirit soul. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER ONE IS A BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA, VAISYA, SUDRA, SANNYASI, GRHASTHA OR WHATEVER. IF ONE SIMPLY UNDERSTANDS THIS SCIENCE, HE CAN BECOME A SPIRITUAL MASTER.

It is stated in the Hari-bhakti-vilasa that one should not accept initiation from a person who is not in the brahminical order if there is a fit person in the brahminical order present. This instruction is meant for those who are overly dependent on the mundane social order and is suitable for those who want to remain in mundane life. IF ONE UNDERSTANDS THE TRUTH OF KRSNA CONSCIOUSNESS AND SERIOUSLY DESIRES TO ATTAIN TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PERFECTION OF LIFE, HE CAN ACCEPT A SPIRITUAL MASTER FROM ANY SOCIAL STATUS, PROVIDED THE SPIRITUAL MASTER IS FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA. SRILA BHAKTISIDDHANTA SARASVATI THAKURA ALSO STATES THAT ALTHOUGH ONE IS SITUATED AS A BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA, VAISYA, SUDRA, BRAHMACARI, VANAPRASTHA, GRHASTHA OR SANNYASI, IF HE IS CONVERSANT IN THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA HE CAN BECOME A SPIRITUAL MASTER AS VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU, DIKSA-GURU OR SIKSA-GURU. The spiritual master who first gives information about spiritual life is called the vartma-pradarsaka-guru, the spiritual master who initiates according to the regulations of the sastras is called the diksa-guru, and the spiritual master who gives instructions for elevation is called the siksa-guru. FACTUALLY THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A SPIRITUAL MASTER DEPEND ON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA. It does not matter whether he is a brahmana, ksatriya, sannyasi or sudra. THIS INJUNCTION GIVEN BY SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU IS NOT AT ALL AGAINST THE INJUNCTIONS OF THE SASTRAS. In the Padma Purana it is said:

na sudra bhagavad-bhaktas te 'pi bhagavatottamah  
sarva-varnesu te sudra ye na bhakta janardane

One who is actually advanced in spiritual knowledge of Krsna is never a sudra, even though he may have been born in a sudra family. However, even if a vipra, or brahmana, is very expert in the six brahminical activities (pathana, pathana, yajana, yajana, dana, pratigraha) and is also well versed in the Vedic hymns, he cannot become a spiritual master unless he is a Vaisnava. But if one is born in the family of candalas yet is well versed in Krsna consciousness, he can become a guru. These are the sastric injunctions, and strictly following these injunctions, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, as a grhastha named Sri Visvambhara, was initiated by a sannyasi-guru named Isvara Puri. Similarly, Sri Nityananda Prabhu was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, a sannyasi. According to others, however, He was initiated by Laksmipati Tirtha. Advaita Acarya, although a grhastha, was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, and many devotees born in caste brahmana families were initiated by Sri Rasikananda (a disciple of Sri Syamananda Prabhu), although Rasikananda was not born in a brahmana family. There are many instances in which a born brahmana took initiation from a person who was not born in a brahmana family. The brahminical symptoms are explained in Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.11.35), wherein it is stated:

yasya yal-laksanam proktam pumso varnabhivyanjakam  
yad anyatrapī drsyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiset

If a person is born in a sudra family but has all the qualities of a spiritual master, he should be accepted not only as a brahmana but as a qualified spiritual master also. This is also the instruction of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura therefore introduced the sacred thread ceremony for all Vaisnavas according to the rules and regulations.



Sometimes a Vaisnava who is a bhajananandi does not take the savitra-samskara (sacred thread initiation) {SAVITRA-SAMSKARA MENTIONED HERE REFERS TO THE UPANAYANAM SAMSKARA BY WHICH THE GURU BRINGS THE DISCIPLE CLOSER FOR TEACHING, THE MAIN ELEMENT OF IT IS THE TEACHING OF THE VEDIC SAVITRI OR BRAHMA GAYATRI MANTRA}, but this does not mean that this system should be used for preaching work. There are two kinds of Vaisnavas—bhajananandi and goshty-anandi. A bhajananandi is not interested in preaching work, but a goshty-anandi is interested in spreading Krsna consciousness to benefit the people and increase the number of Vaisnavas. A Vaisnava is understood to be above the position of a brahmana. As a preacher, he should be recognized as a brahmana; otherwise there may be a misunderstanding of his position as a Vaisnava. However, a Vaisnava brahmana is not selected on the basis of his birth but according to his qualities. Unfortunately, those who are unintelligent do not know the difference between a brahmana and a Vaisnava. They are under the impression that unless one is a brahmana he cannot be a spiritual master. For this reason only, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu makes the statement in this verse:

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya  
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya  
[Cc. Madhya 8.128]

If one becomes a guru, he is automatically a brahmana. SOMETIMES A CASTE GURU {OR AN ANTI-VDG MALCONTENT} SAYS THAT YE KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA, SEI GURU HAYA MEANS THAT ONE WHO IS NOT A BRAHMANA MAY BECOME A SIKSA-GURU OR A VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU BUT NOT AN INITIATOR GURU. ACCORDING to such caste gurus, birth and family ties are considered foremost. However, the hereditary consideration is not acceptable to Vaisnavas. THE WORD GURU IS EQUALLY APPLICABLE TO THE VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU, SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU. UNLESS WE ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE ENUNCIATED BY SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU, THIS KRSNA CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT CANNOT SPREAD ALL OVER THE WORLD. According to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's intentions, prthivite ache yata nagaradi-grama sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama. [CB Antya-khanda 4.126] Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's cult must be preached all over the world. This does not mean that people should take to His teachings and remain sudras or candalas. As soon as one is trained as a pure Vaisnava, he must be accepted as a bona fide brahmana. This is the essence of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's instructions in this verse. CC Mad 8.128

But one may counter that not all vartma-pradarsaka-guru or patha-pradarsaka-guru, siksa-gurus are qualified to be diksa gurus.

We agree also with this. Those that are not qualified are not "YEI KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA" OR "KNOW[ER]S [OF] THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA [FULLY]. Another aspect that a mantra diksa guru has to possess is he or she has to be himself or herself initiated into the Vaisnava mantras that they will give to others. One cannot initiate another into a mantra that one is not himself or herself initiated into. That is a given.

So let us look at two examples of Vaisnavi vartma-pradarsaka-gurus or patha-pradarsaka-gurus who were not qualified to give diksha. Let us see why.

1. Suniti the mother of Dhruva maharaja.

sa ca svarlokam aroksyan  
sunitim jananim dhruvah  
anvasmarad agam hitva  
dinam yasye tri-vistapam

Dhruva was seated in the transcendental airplane, which was just about to

start, when he remembered his poor mother, Suniti. He thought to himself, "How shall I go alone to the Vaikuntha planet and leave behind my poor mother?"

## PURPORT

Dhruva had a feeling of obligation to his mother, Suniti. It was Suniti who HAD GIVEN HIM THE CLUE WHICH HAD NOW ENABLED HIM TO BE PERSONALLY CARRIED TO THE VAIKUNTHA PLANET BY THE ASSOCIATES OF LORD VISNU. He now remembered her and wanted to take her with him. ACTUALLY, DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S MOTHER, SUNITI, WAS HIS PATHA-PRADARSAKA-GURU. PATHA-PRADARSAKA-GURU MEANS "THE GURU, OR THE SPIRITUAL MASTER, WHO SHOWS THE WAY." Such a guru is sometimes called siksa-guru. ALTHOUGH NARADA MUNI WAS HIS DIKSA-GURU (INITIATING SPIRITUAL MASTER), SUNITI, HIS MOTHER, WAS THE FIRST WHO GAVE HIM INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THE FAVOR OF THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD. It is the duty of the siksa-guru or diksa-guru to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. ACCORDING TO SASTRIC INJUNCTIONS, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU, AND GENERALLY THE SIKSA-GURU LATER ON BECOMES THE DIKSA-GURU. SUNITI, HOWEVER, BEING A WOMAN, AND SPECIFICALLY HIS MOTHER, COULD NOT BECOME DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S DIKSA-GURU. Still, he was not less obliged to Suniti. There was no question of carrying Narada Muni to Vaikunthaloka, but Dhruva Maharaja thought of his mother.

Whatever plan the Supreme Personality of Godhead contemplates immediately fructifies. Similarly, a devotee who is completely dependent on the Supreme Lord can also fulfill his wishes by the grace of the Lord. The Lord fulfills His wishes independently, but a devotee fulfills his wishes simply by being dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore as soon as Dhruva Maharaja thought of his poor mother, he was assured by the associates of Visnu that Suniti was also going to Vaikunthaloka, in another plane. Dhruva Maharaja had thought that he was going alone to Vaikunthaloka, leaving behind his mother, which was not very auspicious because people would criticize him for going alone to Vaikunthaloka and not carrying with him Suniti, who had given him so much. But Dhruva also considered that he was not personally the Supreme. Therefore, if Krsna fulfilled his desires, only then would it be possible. Krsna could immediately understand his mind, and He told Dhruva that his mother was also going with him. This incident proves that a pure devotee like Dhruva Maharaja can fulfill all his desires; by the grace of the Lord, he becomes exactly like the Lord, and thus whenever he thinks of anything, his wish is immediately fulfilled. SB 3.12.32

{Note above that Suniti "HAD GIVEN HIM THE CLUE WHICH HAD NOW ENABLED HIM TO BE PERSONALLY CARRIED TO THE VAIKUNTHA PLANET BY THE ASSOCIATES OF LORD VISNU", she had not given him more than a clue by telling him to go to the forest, and perform austerities (meditation was the yuga dharma) for pleasing Lord Visnu. "ALTHOUGH NARADA MUNI WAS HIS DIKSA-GURU (INITIATING SPIRITUAL MASTER), SUNITI, HIS MOTHER, WAS THE FIRST WHO GAVE HIM INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THE FAVOR OF THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD." "ACCORDING TO SASTRIC INJUNCTIONS, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU, AND GENERALLY THE SIKSA-GURU LATER ON BECOMES THE DIKSA-GURU. The fact is that Suniti's advise to Dhruva was incomplete, because she although she advised him to go to the forest, perform austerities and meditate on Lord Visnu she did not give him the mantra by which to meditate on Lord Visnu. WHY? Anti-VDG malcontents make much of the next sentence in the purport. They try to use it to apply to all women and all mothers. However there are many reasons why this is not so. Let us examine the facts. SUNITI, HOWEVER, BEING A WOMAN, AND SPECIFICALLY HIS MOTHER, COULD NOT BECOME DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S DIKSA-GURU." They say that Suniti could not be Dhruva's diksha guru because she was a woman and specifically his mother. Yes, we agree. But this is not the full explanation. In the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society that Suniti and Dhruva lived during Satya Yuga women did not take initiation at all. It was considered enough for them to follow the

directions of their husband who was seen as their pati-guru. So, yes we agree that in the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society and in Satya Yuga women and mothers could not be diksha gurus. They were not initiated and so they were unable to transmit a mantra which they were never initiated into themselves. Let us see the next verse and purport and see if Srila Prabhupada addresses this point.}

iti vyavasitam tasya  
vyavasaya surottamau  
darsayam asatur devim  
puro yanena gacchatim

The great associates of Vaikunthaloka, Nanda and Sunanda, could understand the mind of Dhruva Maharaja, and thus they showed him that his mother, Suniti, was going forward in another plane.

#### PURPORT

This incident proves that the siksa- or diksa-guru who has a disciple who strongly executes devotional service like Dhruva Maharaja can be carried by the disciple even though the instructor is not as advanced. ALTHOUGH SUNITI WAS AN INSTRUCTOR TO DHRUVA MAHARAJA, SHE COULD NOT GO TO THE FOREST BECAUSE SHE WAS A WOMAN, NOR COULD SHE EXECUTE AUSTERITIES AND PENANCES AS DHRUVA MAHARAJA DID.

Still, Dhruva Maharaja was able to take his mother with him. Similarly, Prahlada Maharaja also delivered his atheistic father, Hiranyakasipu. THE CONCLUSION IS THAT A DISCIPLE OR AN OFFSPRING WHO IS A VERY STRONG DEVOTEE CAN CARRY WITH HIM TO VAIKUNTHALOKA EITHER HIS FATHER, MOTHER OR SIKSA- OR DIKSA-GURU. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura used to say, "If I could perfectly deliver even one soul back home, back to Godhead, I would think my mission—propagating Krsna consciousness—to be successful." The Krsna consciousness movement is spreading now all over the world, and sometimes I think that even though I am crippled in many ways, if one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Maharaja, then he will be able to carry me with him to Vaikunthaloka. SB 3.12.33

{ALTHOUGH SUNITI WAS AN INSTRUCTOR TO DHRUVA MAHARAJA, SHE COULD NOT GO TO THE FOREST BECAUSE SHE WAS A WOMAN, NOR COULD SHE EXECUTE AUSTERITIES AND PENANCES

AS DHRUVA MAHARAJA DID. So Suniti because she was a woman could not go to the forest, could not execute austerities and penances, thus she could not perform the yuga dharma of Satya Yuga. How then could she go back to Godhead. Simple. In Satya Yuga a woman could go back to Godhead by following the path of her pati-guru or in this case being picked up by her perfected son. She was not initiated because the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society she lived in expected her to simply follow her husband as pati-guru and not to take initiation herself or go to the forest and perform austerities and penances. "THE CONCLUSION IS THAT A DISCIPLE OR AN OFFSPRING WHO IS A VERY STRONG DEVOTEE CAN CARRY WITH HIM TO VAIKUNTHALOKA EITHER HIS FATHER, MOTHER OR SIKSA- OR DIKSA-GURU." So women in the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society of Satya Yuga could attain Vaikuntha either by following their husbands path i.e. pati-guru, or by having a siksha disciple like Dhruva maharaja who became perfected by going to the forest, performing austerities and penances and practicing meditation on the mantra given by his diksha guru Narada Muni. But women in that time and circumstance could not give mantra diksha because they had never taken mantra diksha neither could they go to the forest and perform the austerities, penances and meditation.

Today however in ISKCON the situation is completely different. The Yuga Dharma

is Harinama Sankirtana which does not require one to go to the forest and perform austerities and penances, nor long bouts of meditation. The Hare Krishna Mahamantra although it is a Vaidic mantra (from Kalisantarayopanisad) was freely given to every man and woman regardless of their high or low births by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. This despite the Caste-by-birth conscious Brahmins of Navadvipa objecting to this. Not only that but all the diksha mantras given to men are also given to women including the Savitri (Brahma) gayatri. Women and men are thus equally initiated in ISKCON and can and do both perform Brahminical duties like deity worship which are according to Caste-by-birth Varnasharama ONLY allowed for males born in dvija (Brahmin, Ksatriya and Vaisya) families. So how is this the same circumstance as Suniti who was living in a Caste-by-birth society in Satya Yuga? Answer: It is not the same circumstances and therefore the example of Suniti not being a diksha guru is not applicable to ISKCON today.

So regarding Krishna Dharmas email:

Will it be a "calamity"? So far every time the GBC tries to interfere in the natural sastric system it seems there are calamities. In this case we have at least one proposed VDG (Vaisnavi Diksha Guru i.e. Urmila devi dasi) who is traveling around the world arguably preaching much more than many male devotees and attracting sincere persons who have gained faith in her and are waiting years to take diksha from her. It's been decades since the GBC passed resolutions accepting VDGs. And justice delayed is justice denied.

I agree with Krishna Dharma prabhu. Who's business is it anyway? If all persons involved are following the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, 4 regs and 16 rounds and are loyal to ISKCON, what business is it of a few malcontents who want to interfere? Let them concentrate on their own spiritual lives which are not effected in the least by VDGs initiating in ISKCON. If VDGs are so bad then everyone will see that and no one will gain faith in them and want to take diksha from them.

The very same sastric references given by the malcontents to show that women cannot be gurus also state that sudra born or mlecca born (antya-ja, lit. of other birth) are also rejected. Why do the malcontents ONLY care about opposing women gurus, their quotes also declare that no person born a sudra or mlecca can also be guru. They are nothing but hypocrites. This is called ardha kukuta nyaya. Or accepting only half the hen i.e. the part that lays eggs, but not feeding the other end. The fact is that accepting quotes that deny women the possibility to be diksha gurus means also automatically denying men not born in dvija families also (practically all present ISKCON gurus, is there even any ISKCON guru born in a brahmin family?)

Obviously the GBC cannot accept their sastric quotes AS IS, because to do so would mean they have to accept only gurus born in brahmin (dvija i.e. brahmin, ksatriya or vaisya) families. LOL!

Therefore the malcontents MOVE THE GOAL POSTS. They assume that sudra and mlecca born males can be elevated to be qualified to give Vaisnava diksha by themselves taking Vaisnava diksha, but they deny that brahmin, ksatriya, vaisya, or sudra or mlecca born women can similarly be elevated to be qualified to give Vaisnava diksha by taking Vaisnava diksha. Did Srila Prabhupada even say such a thing? NO, never. In fact he said the exact opposite. The malcontents normally do not quote the full context when Srila Prabhupada makes these statements. They take very minimal quotations and present them as a SMOKE SCREEN so that people do not understand the full purport of his statements, for example:

Interview with Professors O'Connell, Motilal and Shivaram —  
June 18, 1976, Toronto

OF COURSE, BECAUSE SUPERFICIALLY, BODILY, THERE IS SOME DISTINCTION, SO WE KEEP WOMEN SEPARATELY FROM MEN, THAT'S ALL. OTHERWISE, THE RIGHTS ARE THE SAME...IF SHE IS ABLE TO GO TO THE HIGHEST PERFECTION OF LIFE, WHY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BECOME GURU? BUT, NOT SO MANY. ACTUALLY ONE WHO HAS ATTAINED THE PERFECTION, SHE CAN BECOME GURU. BUT MAN OR WOMAN, UNLESS ONE HAS ATTAINED THE PERFECTION... YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA. SEI GURU HAYA [CC. MADHYA 8.128]. THE QUALIFICATION OF GURU IS THAT HE MUST BE FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE SCIENCE OF KR.S.N.A. THEN HE OR SHE CAN BECOME GURU. YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA., SEI GURU HAYA. [BREAK] IN OUR MATERIAL WORLD, IS IT ANY PROHIBITION THAT WOMAN CANNOT BECOME PROFESSOR? IF SHE IS QUALIFIED, SHE CAN BECOME PROFESSOR. WHAT IS THE WRONG THERE? SHE MUST BE QUALIFIED. THAT IS THE POSITION. SO SIMILARLY, IF THE WOMAN UNDERSTANDS KR.S.N.A CONSCIOUSNESS PERFECTLY, SHE CAN BECOME GURU.

The malcontents only quote:

If she is able to go to the highest perfection of life, why it is not possible to become guru? But, not so many. Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru.

They leave out:

Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same.

and

But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection... Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kr.s.n.a. Then he or she can become guru. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta., sei guru haya. [break]

and

In our material world, is it any prohibition that woman cannot become professor? If she is qualified, she can become professor. What is the wrong there? She must be qualified. That is the position. So similarly, if the woman understands Kr.s.n.a consciousness perfectly, she can become guru.

Above I give the full quote so that everyone can understand that the purport of Srila Prabhupadas full statement is that the qualification for guru is EXACTLY THE SAME for men and women. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]

Next the malcontents MOVE THE GOAL POSTS AGAIN.

They then admit that women can be diksha gurus but ONLY if they have "seen God face to face"? And they get this from an obscure Pancaratra Samhita called Bharadvaja Samhita only quoted once (in the Vedabase) by Srila Prabhupada. Now we do not deny this is a bonafide sastra just as we do not deny that Manu Samhita is a bonafide sastra (which Srila Prabhupada called the Law book of Mankind and is quoted hundreds of times in the Vedabase). But what we do deny is that Srila Prabhupada wanted to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those sastras as a basis for the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha Guru.

Srila Prabhupada did not accept that the qualification to be guru is based on customary hereditary, ecclesiastic or social considerations. He tells us this clearly in the section defining Guru Tattva in Caitanya Caritamrta (the first chapter of Adi Lila teaches Gaudiya Vaisnava Guru Tattva):

SRI JIVA GOSVAMI ADVISES THAT ONE NOT ACCEPT A SPIRITUAL MASTER IN TERMS OF HEREDITARY OR CUSTOMARY SOCIAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL CONVENTIONS. ONE SHOULD SIMPLY TRY TO FIND A GENUINELY QUALIFIED SPIRITUAL MASTER FOR ACTUAL ADVANCEMENT IN SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. CC Adi 1.35 purport

dasan

GKD

On Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 8:25 PM David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

Newsflash: The Indian Bureau just finished its meetings in Pune. They voted unanimously to request the GBC to discuss the FDG/VDG issue with them before taking any vote.

(This reply adds Sati dd to the list of receivers. Somehow she got omitted. Reply to this email please, not the one that I posted just prior.)

On Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 4:56 PM Bob Cohen  
<[bobcohen@ivs.edu](mailto:bobcohen@ivs.edu)> wrote:

I vote yes in the straw vote

To me the argument is simple and does not need much word jugglery. One senior swami has described analyzed brilliantly:

If a person receives a mantra from a bona fide guru, he or she is, as a 'carrier' of the mantra, potentially able to give the mantra to another person. If half the population of the world are deemed unqualified to give a mantra because of their gender, it would imply that they would of necessity be deemed not qualified to receive it. Conversely, if qualified to receive mantra (as Srila Prabhupada ever so clearly determined), then women can be qualified to give mantra.

From another angle (if slightly far-fetched): It would also seem reasonable that if one considers it 'adharmā' for



women to give mantra, considering the crying need for spreading KC in the world today, we can understand that on the basis of 'apaddharma' (dharma in unusual, troubled circumstances), the option could be accepted that women could give mantra.

Ys

bt

**From:** Krishna Kirti Das <[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, February 7, 2019 12:13 AM

**To:** David Shapiro <[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>

**Cc:** Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>;

Krishnarupa Dasi <[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>;

Visakha Dasi <[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)>; Carl Woodham

<[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>; Mahatma Das <[...](mailto:maha</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

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Sat, Feb 9, 2019 at 9:38 AM

**[Rukmini Walker](#)**

<[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)>

To: Visakha Dasi <[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)>

Cc: Nrsimhananda das David Shapiro

<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>, Brahmatirtha Das

<[bobcohen@ivs.edu](mailto:bobcohen@ivs.edu)>, Krishna Kirti Das

<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>, Damodara Dasa

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>, Kalakantha

<[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>, Mahatma das

<[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>, Pancaratna Dasa

<[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar



<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha  
Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS  
(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Obeisances to all.

I deeply appreciated this letter from Visakha Devi, her excellent points about the Sri Sampradaya not being our Sampradaya, and most especially her on-point quote from the CCML.

Thank you so much! Sadhu! Sadhu!

Your indebted servant,

Rukmini dd

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your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

On Feb 8, 2019, at 5:39 AM, David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

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Sat, Feb 9, 2019 at 9:39 PM



**[Visakha Dasi](#)**

<[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)>

To: Rukmini Devi Dasi <[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)>

Cc: Nrsimhananda das David Shapiro

<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>, Brahmatirtha Das

<[bobcohen@ivs.edu](mailto:bobcohen@ivs.edu)>, Krishna Kirti Das

<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>, Damodara Dasa

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>, Kalakantha

<[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>, Mahatma das

<[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>, Pancaratna Dasa

<[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<[pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com)>, Narahari

<[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com)>, Suresvara

<[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com)>, Ajita Cozzi <[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com)>,

Atmanivedana Swami <[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net)>,

BB Keshava Swami <[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com)>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com)>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<[BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net)>, Chris Ostrowski

<[chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com)>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<[dhruva.k.108@gmail.com](mailto:dhruva.k.108@gmail.com)>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Dear Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Regarding the below letter from Bhakti-lata, I was about to respond to it with an apology and explanation, but then I hesitated because I question if this is an actual person or if it is a member of the anti-FDG posing as Bhakti-lata. The reasons I wonder about this are:

- \* Years ago, when the anti-FDG group were known GHQ, a few of us strongly suspected that one or more of them regularly wrote letters using a woman's name;
- \* What I initially wrote would not, ordinarily, evoke such a vituperative reaction;
- \* I have met a number of Indian ladies over the years and I can't think of one who would speak in this way, even if offended;
- \* The author of the letter seems to want to threaten and cower people into submission — the author attempts to evoke fear into the hearts of those who disagree — a very masculine attempt.

Anyway, this is all circumstantial evidence. I would like to get the address and Skype number of Bhakti-lata so I can speak with her face to face, but I have no idea how to do that. What do you suggest?

Thank you.

your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Prabhus,

Hare Krsna.

Today I received an email from a very irate mataji originally from a Iyengar family (Sri Vaisnava) who took the comments of Vishakha dd and Rukmini dd as very insulting to to Sri Vaisnavas.

It seems that just as in the case of Sabarimala where many pious and religious women want to uphold their ancient traditions that that there are still sincere Vaisnavis in ISKCON coming from traditional backgrounds who are not contaminated by feminism as is the case with the two "ladies" she is addressing.

I include her letter as well as the letter she is responding to. I also make a some comments below between square brackets [ ]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bhaktilata Dasi** <[bhaktilata1@gmail.com](mailto:bhaktilata1@gmail.com)>

Date: Sat, Feb 9, 2019 at 11:56 AM

Subject: SABHA's non-confidential discussion

To: <[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)> [Rukiminin dd]

Cc: <[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)> [Vishakha dd],

<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>, <[Srinjaya.dasa@gmail.com](mailto:Srinjaya.dasa@gmail.com)>

Dear Matajis,

Hare Krsna.

I was raised in a Sri Vaisnava family and my husband too. And it was with horror that I read your insulting and ungrateful letter regarding Sri Vaisnavas. I will never forget this offense. I will spread your names and pictures everywhere. Many devotees in ISKCON come from the Sri Vaisnava community and we all take your statements as the greatest Vaisnava aparadha.

When ISKCON was in danger of being smashed by its enemies in the 1970s, who did they turn too? The Sri Vaisnavas to get their support and backing by giving their valued opinion that ISKCON was bona fide. And such letter was written by Ranjaraja Bhattar the pontiff of Srirangam.

Even today ISKCON works in partnership with both the Sri Vaisnava and Madhva Sampradaya. My sister is married to a Madhva who is now an ISKCON member.

This is what the *Srimad Bhagavatam* 11.5.38-40 says about the devotees of S India.

My dear King, the people of Satya-yuga and other ages eagerly desire to take birth in this Age of Kali, since in this age there will be many devotees of the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa. These devotees will appear in various places but will be especially numerous in South India. O master of men, in the Age of Kali those persons who drink the waters of the holy rivers of Draviḍa-deśa, such as the Tāmraparṇī, Krtamālā, Payasvinī, the extremely pious Kāverī and the Praticī Mahānadī, will almost all be purehearted devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva.

Your whole attitude smack of such hatred and condescension that it beggars the mind that this could spring from the lips of a Vaisnavi. But seeing that you still cling to your Yavana and Mllecha customs we have serious doubts that you are Vaisnavis, as feminism and Vaisnavism are antithetical to each other. So you must be just posing as devotees.

We are not against Western devotees, we admire sincere ones who delve deep into Krsna's Vedic culture. But you fake devotees are disgusting.

Aside from that the interviews of some highly respected Sri Vaisnava scholars is but a small part of the presentation rather the two texts written by our own scholars is the main thrust and for that you have no answer. They are found here

[https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page\\_id=826](https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page_id=826)

A pox on both of you. Yes I am angry, very angry with you. And if I have any punya derived from my pativrata may you both be cursed.

[I said she was really angry )-: ]

And the verse of SB 2.7.46 you quote has no reference to being a diksha guru. And there are plenty of indications which you ignore. For example you ignore where Prabhupada said Suniti could not be a diksha guru because she was a woman. And you ignore the whole *Narada Pancaratra* which is accepted by all gaudiyas.

My husband has been saying that the word in India is that if the GBC passes this insane proposition to please crazy women with big egos like you then we in ISKCON India will leave ISKCON. I am praying that that will happen sooner than later.

In the mean time a thousand imprecations and execrations on both of your miserable souls. May you fall from spiritual life and take birth for 10 million lifetime of Lord Brahma in male bodies.

I will now forward your insulting texts to leaders in ISKCON India.

Yours in the service of the true followers of Srila Prabhupada

Bhaktilata devi dasi

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Sat, Feb 9, 2019 at 9:48 PM



[David Shapiro](#)

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

Cc: Rukmini Devi Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Brahmatirtha Das <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Kalakantha

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das

<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi

devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,

Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Dear Visakha dd, et al,

PAMHO AGTSP

I wouldn't either dignify that letter with a reply nor waste time trying



to discover its source. It's a horrible diatribe and doesn't deserve our attention.

YS, Nrsimhananda das

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your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

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HAYA. [BREAK] IN OUR MATERIAL WORLD, IS IT ANY PROHIBITION THAT WOMAN CANNOT BECOME PROFESSOR? IF SHE IS QUALIFIED, SHE CAN BECOME PROFESSOR. WHAT IS THE WRONG THERE? SHE MUST BE QUALIFIED. THAT IS THE POSITION. SO SIMILARLY, IF THE WOMAN UNDERSTANDS KR.S.N.A CONSCIOUSNESS PERFECTLY, SHE CAN BECOME GURU.

The malcontents only quote:

If she is able to go to the highest perfection of life, why it is not possible to become guru? But, not so many. Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru.

They leave out:

Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same.

and

But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection... Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kr.s.n.a. Then he or she can become guru. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta., sei guru haya. [break]

and

In our material world, is it any prohibition that woman cannot become professor? If she is qualified, she can become professor. What is the wrong there? She must be qualified. That is the position. So similarly, if the woman understands Kr.s.n.a consciousness perfectly, she can become guru.

Above I give the full quote so that everyone can understand that the purport of Srila Prabhupadas full statement is that the qualification for guru is EXACTLY THE SAME for men and women. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]

Next the malcontents MOVE THE GOAL POSTS AGAIN.

They then admit that women can be diksha gurus but ONLY if they have "seen God face to face"? And they get this from an obscure Pancaratra Samhita called Bharadvaja Samhita only quoted once (in the Vedabase) by Srila Prabhupada. Now we do not deny this is a bonafide sastra just as we do not deny that Manu Samhita is a bonafide sastra (which Srila Prabhupada called the Law book of Mankind and is quoted hundreds of times in the Vedabase). But what we do deny is that Srila Prabhupada wanted to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those sastras as a basis for the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha Guru.

Srila Prabhupada did not accept that the qualification to be guru is based on customary hereditary, ecclesiastic or social considerations. He tells us this clearly in the section defining Guru Tattva in Caitanya Caritamrta (the first chapter of Adi Lila teaches Gaudiya Vaisnava Guru Tattva):

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Sat, Feb 9, 2019 at 9:58 PM

**Visakha Dasi**

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>

To: Nrsimhananda das David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Rukmini Devi Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>,

Brahmatirtha Das <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Kalakantha

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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On Feb 9, 2019, at 11:18 AM, David Shapiro <[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Visakha dd, et al,  
PAMHO AGTSP

I wouldn't either dignify that letter with a reply nor waste time trying to discover its source. It's a horrible diatribe and doesn't deserve our attention.

YS, Nrsimhananda das

Dear Nrsimhananda Prabhu,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I respectfully disagree with you. If the letter is from Bhakti-

lata, I would like to understand her position more clearly and try to explain mine. If the letter is not from a woman named Bhakti-lata who has a husband who says what she claims, I want to know who it is from.

I think we all should know who it is from, for that person is lacking integrity, something we should be aware of in our dealings.

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Sun, Feb 10, 2019 at 5:20 AM

**Krishnarupa Dasi**

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Devi Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Brahmaturtha Das

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Kalakantha

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma das <mahat@aol.com>,

Pancaratra Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB

Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti

Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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I have to agree with Vishaka on the point she made re the authenticity of the email. It seems too vitriolic that I too doubt the true authorship of such a missive ("a pox on you" – even hardly a term that an Indian bodied person would use, let alone a female. It has very Western connotations).

Yr sr

Krishnarupa dd

***Krishne matir astuI hV***  
**Women's Minister**  
**ISKCON Australia**  
**National Council Member**  
**SABHA Member**

**0416 17 97 33**  
**India: +91 8101 485 058**  
**Skype: Carolkr1**  
**[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)**

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**Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/ SABHA's non-confidential discussion**

Inbox



Sun, Feb 10, 2019 at 5:21 AM

**Krishnarupa Dasi**

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

To: Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

Cc: Nrsimhananda das David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Rukmini Devi Dasi

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Brahmatirtha Das

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Kalakantha

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das

<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das



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Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Once again I agree with Visakha that we should verify who that  
email is from and be alerted indeed if it is a masquerade.

*Krishne matir astu*

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On Sun, 10 Feb 2019 at 03:28, Visakha Dasi  
<[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)> wrote:

On Feb 9, 2019, at 11:18 AM, David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Visakha dd, et al,  
PAMHO AGTSP

I wouldn't either dignify that letter with a reply nor waste time trying  
to discover its source. It's a horrible diatribe and doesn't deserve our  
attention.

YS, Nrsimhananda das

Dear Nrsimhananda Prabhu,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila  
Prabhupada.

I respectfully disagree with you. If the letter is from Bhakti-  
lata, I would like to understand her position more clearly and  
try to explain mine. If the letter is not from a woman named

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Bhakti-lata who has a husband who says what she claims, I want to know who it is from.

I think we all should know who it is from, for that person is lacking integrity, something we should be aware of in our dealings.

your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

On Sat, Feb 9, 2019 at 9:39 PM Visakha Dasi  
<[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Regarding the below letter from Bhakti-lata, I was about to respond to it with an apology and explanation, but then I hesitated because I question if this is an actual person or if it is a member of the anti-FDG posing as Bhakti-lata. The reasons I wonder about this are:

- \* Years ago, when the anti-FDG group were known GHQ, a few of us strongly suspected that one or more of them regularly wrote letters using a woman's name;
- \* What I initially wrote would not, ordinarily, evoke such a vituperative reaction;
- \* I have met a number of Indian ladies over the years and I can't think of one who would speak in this way, even if offended;
- \* The author of the letter seems to want to threaten and cower people into submission — the author attempts to evoke fear into the hearts of those who disagree — a very masculine attempt.

Anyway, this is all circumstantial evidence. I would like to get the address and Skype number of Bhakti-lata so I can speak with her face to face, but I have no idea how to do that. What do you suggest?

Thank you.

your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Prabhus,

Hare Krsna.

Today I received an email from a very irate mataji originally from a Iyengar family (Sri Vaisnava) who took the comments of Vishakha dd and Rukmini dd as very insulting to to Sri Vaisnavas.

It seems that just as in the case of Sabarimala where many pious and religious women want to uphold their ancient traditions that that there are still sincere Vaisnavis in ISKCON coming from traditional backgrounds who are not contaminated by feminism as is the case with the two "ladies" she is addressing.

I include her letter as well as the letter she is responding to. I also make a some comments below between square brackets [ ]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bhaktilata Dasi** <[bhaktilata1@gmail.com](mailto:bhaktilata1@gmail.com)>  
Date: Sat, Feb 9, 2019 at 11:56 AM  
Subject: SABHA's non-confidential discussion  
To: <[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)> [Rukiminin dd]  
Cc: <[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)> [Vishakha dd],  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>,  
<[Srinjaya.dasa@gmail.com](mailto:Srinjaya.dasa@gmail.com)>

Dear Matajis,

Hare Krsna.

I was raised in a Sri Vaisnava family and my husband too. And it was with horror that I read your insulting and ungrateful letter regarding Sri Vaisnavas. I will never forget this offense. I will spread your names and pictures everywhere. Many devotees in ISKCON come from the Sri Vaisnava community and we all take your statements as the greatest Vaisnava aparadha.

When ISKCON was in danger of being smashed by its enemies in the 1970s, who did they turn too? The Sri Vaisnavas to get their support and backing by giving their valued opinion that ISKCON was bona fide. And such letter was written by Ranjaraja Bhattar the pontiff of Srirangam.

Even today ISKCON works in partnership with both the Sri Vaisnava and Madhva Sampradaya. My sister is married to a Madhva who is now an ISKCON member.

This is what the *Srimad Bhagavatam* 11.5.38-40 says about the devotees of S India.

My dear King, the people of Satya-yuga and other ages eagerly desire to take birth in this Age of Kali, since in this age there will be many devotees of the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa. These devotees will appear in various places but will be especially numerous in South India. O master of men, in the Age of Kali those persons who drink the waters of the holy rivers of Draviḍa-deśa, such as the Tāmraparṇī, Krtamālā, Payasvinī, the extremely pious Kāverī and the Praticī Mahānadī, will almost all be purehearted devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva.

Your whole attitude smack of such hatred and

condescension that it beggars the mind that this could spring from the lips of a Vaisnavi. But seeing that you still cling to your Yavana and Mllecha customs we have serious doubts that you are Vaisnavis, as feminism and Vaisnavism are antithetical to each other. So you must be just posing as devotees.

We are not against Western devotees, we admire sincere ones who delve deep into Krsna's Vedic culture. But you fake devotees are disgusting.

Aside from that the interviews of some highly respected Sri Vaisnava scholars is but a small part of the presentation rather the two texts written by our own scholars is the main thrust and for that you have no answer. They are found here

[https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page\\_id=826](https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page_id=826)

A pox on both of you. Yes I am angry, very angry with you. And if I have any punya derived from my pativrata may you both be cursed.

[I said she was really angry )-: ]

And the verse of SB 2.7.46 you quote has no reference to being a diksha guru. And there are plenty of indications which you ignore. For example you ignore where Prabhupada said Suniti could not be a diksha guru because she was a woman. And you ignore the whole *Narada Pancaratra* which is accepted by all gaudiyas.

My husband has been saying that the word in India is that if the GBC passes this insane proposition to please crazy women with big egos like you then we in ISKCON India

will leave ISKCON. I am praying that that will happen sooner than later.

In the mean time a thousand imprecations and execrations on both of your miserable souls. May you fall from spiritual life and take birth for 10 million lifetime of Lord Brahma in male bodies.

I will now forward your insulting texts to leaders in ISKCON India.

Yours in the service of the true followers of Srila Prabhupada

Bhaktilata devi dasi

On Feb 8, 2019, at 11:08 PM, Rukmini Walker <[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)> wrote:

Obeisances to all.

I deeply appreciated this letter from Visakha Devi, her excellent points about the Sri Sampradaya not being our Sampradaya, and most especially her on-point quote from the CCML.

Thank you so much! Sadhu! Sadhu!  
Your indebted servant,  
Rukmini dd

On Fri, 8 Feb 2019 at 22:15, Visakha Dasi <[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)> wrote:

Regarding my participation, I offer these points:

1. As Gaura Keshava Prabhu mentioned, the issue is not complex. The anti-FDG members are making it

appear complex and taking a tremendous amount of their time and our time in doing so.

2. Why do we need to turn to the standards of the Sri Sampradaya? Whatever their standard may be, it is not our sampradaya. Answers to this question are found in our sampradaya.

3. The power of bhakti supersedes all material disqualifications. That is why in the world today we have former mlecchas — meat eaters — who are initiating people into the Brahma Madhva Gaudiya sampradaya. And this power of bhakti can be present regardless of one's body. From Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.7.46:

"Surrendered souls, even from groups leading sinful lives, such as women, the laborer class, the mountaineers and the Sabaras, or even the birds and beasts, can also know about the science of Godhead and become liberated from the clutches of the illusory energy by surrendering unto the pure devotees of the Lord and by following in their footsteps in devotional service."

4. There is no indication from Srila Prabhupada teachings that the qualifications of those who initiate is different for men than for women. In fact, the opposite. The indications are that the qualifications are the same for both, as stated in Caitanya-caritamrita Madhya 18.121-122:

strī-bāla-vṛddha, āra 'caṇḍāla' 'yavana'  
yei tomāra eka-bāra pāya daraśana  
kṛṣṇa-nāma laya, nāce hañā unmatta  
ācārya ha-ila sei, tārila jagata



## SYNONYMS

strī—women; bāla—children; vṛddha—old men; āra—and; caṇḍāla—the lowest of men; yavana—persons who eat meat; yei—anyone who; tomāra—Your; eka-bāra—once; pāya daraśana—gets the sight; kṛṣṇa-nāma—the holy name of Kṛṣṇa; laya—chants; nāce—dances; hañā unmatta—like a madman; ācārya ha-ila—becomes a spiritual master; sei—that man; tārila jagata—delivers the whole world.

## TRANSLATION

"If they see You just once, even women, children, old men, meat-eaters and members of the lowest caste immediately chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, dance like madmen and become spiritual masters capable of delivering the whole world."

For further information and references, this paper is well researched and thorough:

your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

On Feb 8, 2019, at 5:39 AM, David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

A Sabha member reminded me that the Indian Bureau had threatened a few years ago to split from Iskcon if there were VDG's permitted by the GBC. He said that some Sabha members were intimidated by the idea that Iskcon may fracture. I had no thought that such a danger was still existing. I confirmed today that it is not. An anti- FDG Bureau member informed me that whatever is decided, the Bureau will cooperate with the GBC. They only voted to

request discussion on the VDG issue with the GBC before a vote. I posted the "news" because it vividly shows that our deliberations are hardly for nought. The collective comments and decision of the Sabha have the potential to be influential. Many Sabha members have yet to be heard from on this subject. I am trying to ignite some wider participation. I also have been posting Gaura Keshava's rebuttals to Damodara pr. because there has been very little written by Visakha dd as a pro-VDG proponent. I personally send GKP the posts, and he kindly responds. I've tried to wear one hat as a fair arbiter on the issue and the other as a participant. The last thing that I want to do is politicize this issue. We are all truth-seekers at heart, and I'm convinced that laying bare our differences on the subject can lead to a synthesis if not in belief, then, at least, in purpose.

On Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 10:36 AM David Shapiro <[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

I'm posting this reply by Gaura Keshava pr. in favor of VDG in response to Damodar 's and KK's latest posts:

I am sending this much now, but this is incomplete. I have much more that I am writing in response to the Anti-VDG malcontents.

Actually this is not a complex issue although some people want it to seem that way.

[UPPER CASE USED FOR EMPHASIS IN QUOTES BELOW, because bolding may be lost in sending emails through some servers]

{Any comments made by me within other quotes are placed within curly brackets}

WARNING: Beware of persons who tell you that we can understand what Srila Prabhupada wanted for his ISKCON society by quoting obscure sastras or by consulting Caste-by-birth-Conscious Vaisnavas.

arcye visnau sila-dhir gurusu nara-matir vaisnave jati-buddhir  
visnor va vaisnavanam kali-mala-mathane pada-tirtha 'mbu-buddhir  
sri-visnor namni mantre sakala-kalusa-he sabda-samanya-buddhir  
visnau sarvesvarese tad-itara-sama-dhir yasya va naraki sah

If one thinks that the worshipable salagrama-sila is a mere stone, that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being or that a pure Vaisnava preaching the bhakti cult all over the world is a member of a particular caste or material division of society, he is considered a naraki, a candidate for hellish life. CC Antya 6.294 (Quoted from Padma Purana)

N.B. Nara-matir means literally "[ordinary] person-mentality" if we consider a Vaisnava or Vaisnavi guru or teacher to be an ordinary human being that is a hellish mentality and Jati-buddhir means literally "birth-mentality" if we consider an aspect of a Vaisnavas or Vaisnavis material birth to be a disqualification, it is a hellish mentality. Females are also a material division of society.

The malcontents against VDGs (Vaisnavi Diksha Gurus) say that the above does not apply to those born female, it only applies to those born male. Thus they consider the qualification for being a Vaisnava Mantra Diksha guru to be dependent on a customary or social convention i.e. that only dvija born males can be diksha gurus.

Srila Prabhupada did not teach or agree to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those certain sastras which deal with hereditary, customary social or ecclesiastical conventions, as a basis for the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha Guru.

Srila Prabhupada did not accept that the qualification to be guru is based on customary hereditary, ecclesiastic or social considerations. He tells us this clearly in the section defining Guru Tattva in Caitanya Caritamrta (the first chapter of Adi Lila teaches Gaudiya Vaisnava Guru Tattva):

Sri Jiva Gosvami advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding. CC Adi 1.35 purport

Accepting a guru ONLY from a group of hereditary lines of dvija born male gurus is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from a customary social group i.e. only (dvija) males is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from an ecclesiastically approved group i.e. approved by a Church system (ecclesiastical convention means Church rules or GBC resolutions) is wrong as per this statement.

One may accept a guru from one of the above groups, but one must not think that only those who are hereditary gurus, male gurus or Church approved gurus are the ONLY spiritually qualified persons to be guru. If one does then as stated above in the Padma Purana, he has a hellish mentality.

We see things in a more spiritually egalitarian sastric way than the malcontents:

The first spiritual lesson that we are all taught when becoming Vaisnavas is "You are not this body". Spiritually we are all equal. Of course materially we are not equal. And Srila Prabhupada taught us in certain circumstances we have to consider these material differences. In his famous discussion about VDGs he says this:

Interview with Professors O'Connell, Motilal and Shivaram —  
June 18, 1976, Toronto

"Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same."

This objection that the anti-VDG malcontents have about the mixing of men and women is thus not applicable to the position of guru.

(And if they were so worried about men and women mixing due to VDGs they would also be similarly worried about Sannyasis initiating young female disciples. But we see that they are hypocrites and don't consider that a VDG would perhaps be a better guru choice for a young female disciple than a Sannyasi. We, on the other hand, accept that a guru of any gender may have a disciple of any gender as long as they follow Srila Prabhupadas warnings about mixing of the genders i.e. "Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all.")

Our position is to emphasize the spiritual equality of all beings (and to only consider the material differences for ordinary mundane purposes and never spiritual ones).

vidya-vinaya-sampanne  
brahmane gavi hastini  
suni caiva sva-pake ca  
panditah sama-darsinah

The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]. Gita 5.18

One can object that elephants, cows, dogs and dog-eaters are all spiritually equal to a learned and gentle brahmana but they cannot be Vaisnava diksha gurus unless they know the science of Krsna Consciousness perfectly.

We agree.

That is why Lord Caitanya has given the spiritual definition of who can be a guru in Gaudiya Sampradaya:

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya  
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya

#### SYNONYMS

kiba—whether; vipra—a brahmana; kiba—whether; nyasi—a sannyasi; sudra—a sudra;  
kene—why; naya—not; yei—anyone who; krsna-tattva-vetta—a knower of the science of Krsna; sei—that person; guru—the spiritual master; haya—is.

#### TRANSLATION

“Whether one is a brahmana, a sannyasi or a sudra—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Krsna.”

#### PURPORT

This verse is very important to the Krsna consciousness movement. In his Amrta-pravaha-bhasya, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that one should not think that because Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was born a brahmana and was situated in the topmost spiritual order as a sannyasi, it was improper for Him to receive instructions from Srila Ramananda Raya, who belonged to the sudra

caste. To clarify this matter, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu informed Ramananda Raya that knowledge of Krsna consciousness is more important than caste. In the system of varnasrama-dharma there are various duties for the brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas and sudras. Actually the brahmana is supposed to be the spiritual master of all other varnas, or classes, but as far as Krsna consciousness is concerned, everyone is capable of becoming a spiritual master because knowledge in Krsna consciousness is on the platform of the spirit soul. To spread Krsna consciousness, one need only be cognizant of the science of the spirit soul. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER ONE IS A BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA, VAISYA, SUDRA, SANNYASI, GRHASTHA OR WHATEVER. IF ONE SIMPLY UNDERSTANDS THIS SCIENCE, HE CAN BECOME A SPIRITUAL MASTER.

It is stated in the Hari-bhakti-vilasa that one should not accept initiation from a person who is not in the brahminical order if there is a fit person in the brahminical order present. This instruction is meant for those who are overly dependent on the mundane social order and is suitable for those who want to remain in mundane life. IF ONE UNDERSTANDS THE TRUTH OF KRSNA CONSCIOUSNESS AND SERIOUSLY DESIRES TO ATTAIN TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PERFECTION OF LIFE, HE CAN ACCEPT A SPIRITUAL MASTER FROM ANY SOCIAL STATUS, PROVIDED THE SPIRITUAL MASTER IS FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA. SRILA BHAKTISIDDHANTA SARASVATI THAKURA ALSO STATES THAT ALTHOUGH ONE IS SITUATED AS A BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA, VAISYA, SUDRA, BRAHMACARI, VANAPRASTHA, GRHASTHA OR SANNYASI, IF HE IS CONVERSANT IN THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA HE CAN BECOME A SPIRITUAL MASTER AS VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU, DIKSA-GURU OR SIKSA-GURU. The spiritual master who first gives information about spiritual life is called the vartma-pradarsaka-guru, the spiritual master who initiates according to the regulations of the sastras is called the diksa-guru, and the spiritual master who gives instructions for elevation is called the siksa-guru. FACTUALLY THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A SPIRITUAL MASTER DEPEND ON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA. It does not matter whether he is a brahmana, ksatriya, sannyasi or sudra. THIS INJUNCTION GIVEN BY SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU IS NOT AT ALL AGAINST THE INJUNCTIONS OF THE SASTRAS. In the Padma Purana it is said:

na sudra bhagavad-bhaktas te 'pi bhagavatottamah  
sarva-varnesu te sudra ye na bhakta janardane

One who is actually advanced in spiritual knowledge of Krsna is never a sudra, even though he may have been born in a sudra family. However, even if a vipra, or brahmana, is very expert in the six brahminical activities (pathana, pathana, yajana, yajana, dana, pratigraha) and is also well versed in the Vedic hymns, he cannot become a spiritual master unless he is a Vaisnava. But if one is born in the family of candalas yet is well versed in Krsna consciousness, he can become a guru. These are the sastric injunctions, and strictly following these injunctions, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, as a grhastha named Sri Visvambhara, was initiated by a sannyasi-guru named Isvara Puri. Similarly, Sri Nityananda Prabhu was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, a sannyasi. According to others, however, He was initiated by Laksmipati Tirtha. Advaita Acarya, although a grhastha, was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, and many devotees born in caste brahmana families were initiated by Sri Rasikananda (a disciple of Sri Syamananda Prabhu), although Rasikananda was not born in a brahmana family. There are many instances in which a born brahmana took initiation from a person

who was not born in a brahmana family. The brahminical symptoms are explained in Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.11.35), wherein it is stated:

yasya yal-laksanam proktam pumso varnabhivyanjakam  
yad anyatrapi drsyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiset

If a person is born in a sudra family but has all the qualities of a spiritual master, he should be accepted not only as a brahmana but as a qualified spiritual master also. This is also the instruction of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura therefore introduced the sacred thread ceremony for all Vaisnavas according to the rules and regulations.

Sometimes a Vaisnava who is a bhajanandi does not take the savitra-samskara (sacred thread initiation) {SAVITRA-SAMSKARA MENTIONED HERE REFERS TO THE

UPANAYANAM SAMSKARA BY WHICH THE GURU BRINGS THE DISCIPLE CLOSER FOR TEACHING, THE MAIN ELEMENT OF IT IS THE TEACHING OF THE VEDIC SAVITRI OR BRAHMA GAYATRI

MANTRA}, but this does not mean that this system should be used for preaching work. There are two kinds of Vaisnavas—bhajanandi and goshy-anandi. A bhajanandi is not interested in preaching work, but a goshy-anandi is interested in spreading Krsna consciousness to benefit the people and increase the number of Vaisnavas. A Vaisnava is understood to be above the position of a brahmana. As a preacher, he should be recognized as a brahmana; otherwise there may be a misunderstanding of his position as a Vaisnava. However, a Vaisnava brahmana is not selected on the basis of his birth but according to his qualities. Unfortunately, those who are unintelligent do not know the difference between a brahmana and a Vaisnava. They are under the impression that unless one is a brahmana he cannot be a spiritual master. For this reason only, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu makes the statement in this verse:

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya  
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya  
[Cc. Madhya 8.128]

If one becomes a guru, he is automatically a brahmana. SOMETIMES A CASTE GURU {OR AN ANTI-VDG MALCONTENT} SAYS THAT YE KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA, SEI GURU HAYA

MEANS THAT ONE WHO IS NOT A BRAHMANA MAY BECOME A SIKSA-GURU OR A

VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU BUT NOT AN INITIATOR GURU. ACCORDING to such caste

gurus, birth and family ties are considered foremost. However, the hereditary consideration is not acceptable to Vaisnavas. THE WORD GURU IS EQUALLY APPLICABLE TO THE VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU, SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU. UNLESS WE

ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE ENUNCIATED BY SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU, THIS KRSNA

CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT CANNOT SPREAD ALL OVER THE WORLD. According to Sri

Caitanya Mahaprabhu's intentions, prthivite ache yata nagaradi-grama sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama. [CB Antya-khanda 4.126] Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's cult must be preached all over the world. This does not mean that people should take to His teachings and remain sudras or candalas. As soon as one is trained as a pure Vaisnava, he must be accepted as a bona fide brahmana. This is the essence of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's instructions in this verse. CC Mad 8.128

But one may counter that not all vartma-pradarsaka-guru or patha-pradarsaka-guru, siksa-gurus are qualified to be diksa gurus.

We agree also with this. Those that are not qualified are not "YEI KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA" OR "KNOW[ER]S [OF] THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA [FULLY]. Another aspect that a mantra diksa guru has to possess is he or she has to be himself or herself initiated into the Vaisnava mantras that they will give to others. One cannot initiate another into a mantra that one is not himself or herself initiated into. That is a given.

So let us look at two examples of Vaisnavi vartha-pradarsaka-gurus or patha-pradarsaka-gurus who were not qualified to give diksha. Let us see why.

1. Suniti the mother of Dhruva maharaja.

sa ca svarloka aroksyan  
sunitim jananim dhruvah  
anvasmarad agam hitva  
dinam yasye tri-vistapam

Dhruva was seated in the transcendental airplane, which was just about to start, when he remembered his poor mother, Suniti. He thought to himself, "How shall I go alone to the Vaikuntha planet and leave behind my poor mother?"

#### PURPORT

Dhruva had a feeling of obligation to his mother, Suniti. It was Suniti who HAD GIVEN HIM THE CLUE WHICH HAD NOW ENABLED HIM TO BE PERSONALLY CARRIED TO THE VAIKUNTHA PLANET BY THE ASSOCIATES OF LORD VISNU. He now remembered her and wanted to take her with him. ACTUALLY, DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S MOTHER, SUNITI, WAS HIS PATHA-PRADARSAKA-GURU. PATHA-PRADARSAKA-GURU MEANS "THE GURU, OR THE SPIRITUAL MASTER, WHO SHOWS THE WAY." Such a guru is sometimes called siksa-guru. ALTHOUGH NARADA MUNI WAS HIS DIKSA-GURU (INITIATING SPIRITUAL MASTER), SUNITI, HIS MOTHER, WAS THE FIRST WHO GAVE HIM INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THE FAVOR OF THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD. It is the duty of the siksa-guru or diksa-guru to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. ACCORDING TO SASTRIC INJUNCTIONS, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU, AND GENERALLY THE SIKSA-GURU LATER ON BECOMES THE DIKSA-GURU. SUNITI, HOWEVER, BEING A WOMAN, AND SPECIFICALLY HIS MOTHER, COULD NOT BECOME DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S DIKSA-GURU. Still, he was not less obliged to Suniti. There was no question of carrying Narada Muni to Vaikunthaloka, but Dhruva Maharaja thought of his mother.

Whatever plan the Supreme Personality of Godhead contemplates immediately fructifies. Similarly, a devotee who is completely dependent on the Supreme Lord can also fulfill his wishes by the grace of the Lord. The Lord fulfills His wishes independently, but a devotee fulfills his wishes simply by being dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore as soon as Dhruva Maharaja thought of his poor mother, he was assured by the associates of Visnu that Suniti was also going to Vaikunthaloka, in another plane. Dhruva Maharaja had thought that he was going alone to Vaikunthaloka, leaving behind his mother, which was not very auspicious because people would criticize him for



going alone to Vaikunthaloka and not carrying with him Suniti, who had given him so much. But Dhruva also considered that he was not personally the Supreme. Therefore, if Krsna fulfilled his desires, only then would it be possible. Krsna could immediately understand his mind, and He told Dhruva that his mother was also going with him. This incident proves that a pure devotee like Dhruva Maharaja can fulfill all his desires; by the grace of the Lord, he becomes exactly like the Lord, and thus whenever he thinks of anything, his wish is immediately fulfilled. SB 3.12.32

{Note above that Suniti "HAD GIVEN HIM THE CLUE WHICH HAD NOW ENABLED HIM TO BE PERSONALLY CARRIED TO THE VAIKUNTHA PLANET BY THE ASSOCIATES OF LORD VISNU",

she had not given him more than a clue by telling him to go to the forest, and perform austerities (meditation was the yuga dharma) for pleasing Lord Visnu. "ALTHOUGH NARADA MUNI WAS HIS DIKSA-GURU (INITIATING SPIRITUAL MASTER), SUNITI, HIS MOTHER, WAS THE FIRST WHO GAVE HIM INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THE FAVOR OF THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD." "ACCORDING TO SASTRIC INJUNCTIONS, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU, AND GENERALLY THE SIKSA-GURU LATER ON BECOMES THE DIKSA-GURU. The fact is that Sunitis advise to

Dhruva was incomplete, because she although she advised him to go to the forest, perform austerities and meditate on Lord Visnu she did not give him the mantra by which to meditate on Lord Visnu. WHY? Anti-VDG malcontents make much of the next sentence in the purport. They try to use it to apply to all women and all mothers. However there are many reasons why this is not so. Let us examine the facts. SUNITI, HOWEVER, BEING A WOMAN, AND SPECIFICALLY HIS MOTHER,

COULD NOT BECOME DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S DIKSA-GURU." They say that Suniti could not

be Dhruvas diksha guru because she was a woman and specifically his mother. Yes, we agree. But this is not the full explanation. In the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society that Suniti and Dhruva lived during Satya Yuga women did not take initiation at all. It was considered enough for them to follow the directions of their husband who was seen as their pati-guru. So, yes we agree that in the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society and in Satya Yuga women and mothers could not be diksha gurus. They were not initiated and so they were unable to transmit a mantra which they were never initiated into themselves. Let us see the next verse and purport and see if Srila Prabhupada addresses this point.}

iti vyavasitam tasya  
vyavasaya surottamau  
darsayam asatur devim  
puro yanena gacchatim

The great associates of Vaikunthaloka, Nanda and Sunanda, could understand the mind of Dhruva Maharaja, and thus they showed him that his mother, Suniti, was going forward in another plane.

#### PURPORT

This incident proves that the siksa- or diksa-guru who has a disciple who strongly executes devotional service like Dhruva Maharaja can be carried by the disciple even though the instructor is not as advanced. ALTHOUGH SUNITI WAS AN INSTRUCTOR TO DHRUVA MAHARAJA, SHE COULD NOT GO TO THE FOREST BECAUSE SHE WAS A WOMAN, NOR COULD SHE EXECUTE AUSTERITIES AND PENANCES AS

DHRUVA MAHARAJA DID.

Still, Dhruva Maharaja was able to take his mother with him. Similarly, Prahlada Maharaja also delivered his atheistic father, Hiranyakasipu. THE CONCLUSION IS THAT A DISCIPLE OR AN OFFSPRING WHO IS A VERY STRONG DEVOTEE CAN

CARRY WITH HIM TO VAIKUNTHALOKA EITHER HIS FATHER, MOTHER OR SIKSA- OR

DIKSA-GURU. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura used to say, "If I could perfectly deliver even one soul back home, back to Godhead, I would think my mission—propagating Krsna consciousness—to be successful." The Krsna consciousness movement is spreading now all over the world, and sometimes I think that even though I am crippled in many ways, if one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Maharaja, then he will be able to carry me with him to Vaikunthaloka. SB 3.12.33

{ALTHOUGH SUNITI WAS AN INSTRUCTOR TO DHRUVA MAHARAJA, SHE COULD NOT GO TO THE

FOREST BECAUSE SHE WAS A WOMAN, NOR COULD SHE EXECUTE AUSTERITIES AND PENANCES

AS DHRUVA MAHARAJA DID. So Suniti because she was a woman could not go to the

forest, could not execute austerities and penances, thus she could not perform the yuga dharma of Satya Yuga. How then could she go back to Godhead. Simple.

In Satya Yuga a woman could go back to Godhead by following the path of her pati-guru or in this case being picked up by her perfected son. She was not initiated because the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society she lived in expected her to simply follow her husband as pati-guru and not to take initiation herself or go to the forest and perform austerities and penances. "THE CONCLUSION IS THAT A DISCIPLE OR AN OFFSPRING WHO IS A VERY STRONG DEVOTEE CAN

CARRY WITH HIM TO VAIKUNTHALOKA EITHER HIS FATHER, MOTHER OR SIKSA- OR

DIKSA-GURU." So women in the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society of Satya Yuga could attain Vaikuntha either by following their husbands path i.e. pati-guru, or by having a siksha disciple like Dhruva maharaja who became perfected by going to the forest, performing austerities and penances and practicing meditation on the mantra given by his diksha guru Narada Muni. But women in that time and circumstance could not give mantra diksha because they had never taken mantra diksha neither could they go to the forest and perform the austerities, penances and meditation.

Today however in ISKCON the situation is completely different. The Yuga Dharma is Harinama Sankirtana which does not require one to go to the forest and perform austerities and penances, nor long bouts of meditation. The Hare Krishna Mahamantra although it is a Vaidic mantra (from Kalisantarayopanisad) was freely given to every man and woman regardless of their high or low births by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. This despite the Caste-by-birth conscious Brahmins of Navadvipa objecting to this. Not only that but all the diksha mantras given to men are also given to women including the Savitri (Brahma) gayatri. Women and men are thus equally initiated in ISKCON and can and do both perform Brahminical duties like deity worship which are according to Caste-by-birth Varnasharama ONLY allowed for males born in dvija (Brahmin, Ksatriya and Vaisya) families. So how is this the same circumstance as Suniti who was living in a Caste-by-birth society in Satya Yuga? Answer: It is not the same circumstances and therefore the example of Suniti not being a diksha guru is not applicable to ISKCON today.

So regarding Krishna Dharmas email:

Will it be a "calamity"? So far every time the GBC tries to interfere in the natural sastric system it seems there are calamities. In this case we have at least one proposed VDG (Vaisnavi Diksha Guru i.e. Urmila devi dasi) who is traveling around the world arguably preaching much more than many male devotees and attracting sincere persons who have gained faith in her and are waiting years to take diksha from her. It's been decades since the GBC passed resolutions accepting VDGs. And justice delayed is justice denied.

I agree with Krishna Dharma prabhu. Who's business is it anyway? If all persons involved are following the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, 4 regs and 16 rounds and are loyal to ISKCON, what business is it of a few malcontents who want to interfere? Let them concentrate on their own spiritual lives which are not effected in the least by VDGs initiating in ISKCON. If VDGs are so bad then everyone will see that and no one will gain faith in them and want to take diksha from them.

The very same sastric references given by the malcontents to show that women cannot be gurus also state that sudra born or mlecca born (antya-ja, lit. of other birth) are also rejected. Why do the malcontents ONLY care about opposing women gurus, their quotes also declare that no person born a sudra or mlecca can also be guru. They are nothing but hypocrites. This is called ardhha kukuta nyaya. Or accepting only half the hen i.e. the part that lays eggs, but not feeding the other end. The fact is that accepting quotes that deny women the possibility to be diksha gurus means also automatically denying men not born in dvija families also (practically all present ISKCON gurus, is there even any ISKCON guru born in a brahmin family?)

Obviously the GBC cannot accept their sastric quotes AS IS, because to do so would mean they have to accept only gurus born in brahmin (dvija i.e. brahmin, ksatriya or vaisya) families. LOL!

Therefore the malcontents MOVE THE GOAL POSTS. They assume that sudra and mlecca born males can be elevated to be qualified to give Vaisnava diksha by themselves taking Vaisnava diksha, but they deny that brahmin, ksatriya, vaisya, or sudra or mlecca born women can similarly be elevated to be qualified to give Vaisnava diksha by taking Vaisnava diksha. Did Srila Prabhupada even say such a thing? NO, never. In fact he said the exact opposite. The malcontents normally do not quote the full context when Srila Prabhupada makes these statements. They take very minimal quotations and present them as a SMOKESCREEN so that people do not understand the full purport of his statements, for example:

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June 18, 1976, Toronto

OF COURSE, BECAUSE SUPERFICIALLY, BODILY, THERE IS SOME DISTINCTION, SO WE KEEP WOMEN SEPARATELY FROM MEN, THAT'S ALL. OTHERWISE, THE RIGHTS ARE THE SAME...IF SHE IS ABLE TO GO TO THE HIGHEST PERFECTION OF LIFE, WHY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BECOME GURU? BUT, NOT SO MANY. ACTUALLY ONE WHO HAS ATTAINED THE PERFECTION, SHE CAN BECOME GURU. BUT MAN OR WOMAN, UNLESS ONE HAS ATTAINED THE PERFECTION... YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA. SEI GURU HAYA [CC. MADHYA 8.128]. THE QUALIFICATION OF GURU IS THAT HE MUST BE FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE SCIENCE OF KR.S.N.A. THEN HE OR SHE CAN BECOME GURU. YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA., SEI GURU

HAYA. [BREAK] IN OUR MATERIAL WORLD, IS IT ANY PROHIBITION THAT WOMAN CANNOT BECOME PROFESSOR? IF SHE IS QUALIFIED, SHE CAN BECOME PROFESSOR. WHAT IS THE WRONG THERE? SHE MUST BE QUALIFIED. THAT IS THE POSITION. SO SIMILARLY, IF THE WOMAN UNDERSTANDS KR.S.N.A CONSCIOUSNESS PERFECTLY, SHE CAN BECOME GURU.

The malcontents only quote:

If she is able to go to the highest perfection of life, why it is not possible to become guru? But, not so many. Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru.

They leave out:

Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same.

and

But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection... Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kr.s.n.a. Then he or she can become guru. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta., sei guru haya. [break]

and

In our material world, is it any prohibition that woman cannot become professor? If she is qualified, she can become professor. What is the wrong there? She must be qualified. That is the position. So similarly, if the woman understands Kr.s.n.a consciousness perfectly, she can become guru.

Above I give the full quote so that everyone can understand that the purport of Srila Prabhupadas full statement is that the qualification for guru is EXACTLY THE SAME for men and women. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]

Next the malcontents MOVE THE GOAL POSTS AGAIN.

They then admit that women can be diksha gurus but ONLY if they have "seen God

...

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Sun, Feb 10, 2019 at 7:12 AM

**pancaratnadas**

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>

To: Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Devi Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>

Cc: Nrsimhananda das David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Brahmatirtha Das <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Kalakantha <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma das <mahat@aol.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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It seems that Gaur Keshav Prabhu thinks just because he calls those who oppose VDG, malcontent hypocrites and the offers a deluge of verses that he uses to confirm that Vaisnavi women may be diksha guru even though many of those verses don't specifically refer to diksha guru, that the reader will have to accept it, why because he is Gaur Keshav Prabhu.

The merry go round continues.

Also the letter from Bhakti Lata seems quite serious, I do know Madhav Sampradaya devotees that are not happy with iskcon setting new standards, though they somehow except that Prabhupada could do it, but to just say it must have been a man who wrote it because you did not like it and to not take it seriously and confirm the person and the point first is rather shallow in my mind.

Either way what stands out to me, as the issue is not complex is, why do we have to make the exception the rule. Keep the rule and make exceptions and everyone will get what they want. Everything else is just making it complex.

The position of diksha guru in ISKCON is losing its weight and becoming a formality. Soon it won't mean much if slowly anyone can do it. Men, women, disciples whose guru is still living, female or male. Some only first initiation some both. As long as they have not fallen down in the last five years is about the only qualification needed.

The GBC just gives an NOC but takes no responsibility, this we should be discussing. How is it that they are the Ultimate Managerial Authority but for Diksha Guru they are not responsible. Any unqualified devotee who thinks such and such is a good devotee can request and GBC can give NOC, so the unqualified decide who should be guru. If we are not careful unqualified people will say that you just get diksha to connect to Prabhupada and he will do everything else, do you know, that's what some of our diksha gurus are saying even now .

The subcommittee says the VDG can give first but not second. And the disciple will then find a man to take second and then whose disciple will they be, the first guru or the second, the unqualified disciple should then choose to continue with the



first or go with the second. And do we expect that they will decide by the power of spiritual knowledge or by some material conditioning. If you are going to change then change, if you make VDG, you make an exception, then they should give both.

Your servant pancaratna dasa

Sent from my MI MAX 2

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Sun, Feb 10, 2019 at 8:04 AM

**Bhakti Rasayana Sagar**

<brss108@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Devi

Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Brahmaturtha Das

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Kalakantha

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski



<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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My humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

I support what Visakha Devi wrote.

This is a serious matter, because whoever is behind this letter is giving a really bad name to the Sri Sampradaya, portraying them as plotters and blackmailers. The investigation on this case is a must as well as a report to the Sri Sampradaya authorities.

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

On 9 Feb 2019, at 21:48, David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Visakha dd, et al,

PAMHO AGTSP

I wouldn't either dignify that letter with a reply nor waste time trying to discover its source. It's a horrible diatribe and doesn't deserve our attention.

YS, Nrsimhananda das

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your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

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say such a thing? NO, never. In fact he said the exact opposite. The malcontents normally do not quote the full context when Srila Prabhupada makes these statements. They take very minimal quotations and present them as a SMOKE SCREEN so that people do not understand the full purport of his statements, for example:

Interview with Professors O'Connell, Motilal and Shivaram —  
June 18, 1976, Toronto

OF COURSE, BECAUSE SUPERFICIALLY, BODILY, THERE IS SOME DISTINCTION, SO WE KEEP WOMEN SEPARATELY FROM MEN, THAT'S ALL. OTHERWISE, THE RIGHTS ARE THE SAME...IF SHE IS ABLE TO GO TO THE HIGHEST PERFECTION OF LIFE, WHY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BECOME GURU? BUT, NOT SO MANY. ACTUALLY ONE WHO HAS ATTAINED THE PERFECTION, SHE CAN BECOME GURU. BUT MAN OR WOMAN, UNLESS ONE HAS ATTAINED THE PERFECTION... YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA. SEI GURU HAYA [CC. MADHYA 8.128]. THE QUALIFICATION OF GURU IS THAT HE MUST BE FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE SCIENCE OF KR.S.N.A. THEN HE OR SHE CAN BECOME GURU. YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA., SEI GURU HAYA. [BREAK] IN OUR MATERIAL WORLD, IS IT ANY PROHIBITION THAT WOMAN CANNOT BECOME PROFESSOR? IF SHE IS QUALIFIED, SHE CAN BECOME PROFESSOR. WHAT IS THE WRONG THERE? SHE MUST BE QUALIFIED. THAT IS THE POSITION. SO SIMILARLY, IF THE WOMAN UNDERSTANDS KR.S.N.A CONSCIOUSNESS PERFECTLY, SHE CAN BECOME GURU.

The malcontents only quote:

If she is able to go to the highest perfection of life, why it is not possible to become guru? But, not so many. Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru.

They leave out:

Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same.

and

But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection... Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kr.s.n.a. Then he or she can become guru. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta., sei guru haya. [break]

and

In our material world, is it any prohibition that woman cannot become professor? If she is qualified, she can become professor. What is the wrong there? She must be qualified. That is the position. So similarly, if the woman understands Kr.s.n.a consciousness perfectly, she can become guru.

Above I give the full quote so that everyone can understand that the purport of Srila Prabhupadas full statement is that the qualification for guru is EXACTLY THE SAME for men and women. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]

Next the malcontents MOVE THE GOAL POSTS AGAIN.

They then admit that women can be diksha gurus but ONLY if they have "seen God face to face"? And they get this from an obscure Pancaratra Samhita called Bharadvaja Samhita only quoted once (in the Vedabase) by Srila Prabhupada. Now we do not deny this is a bonafide sastra just as we do not deny that Manu Samhita is a bonafide sastra (which Srila Prabhupada called the Law book of Mankind and is quoted hundreds of times in the Vedabase). But what we do deny is that Srila Prabhupada wanted to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those sastras as a basis for the purely spiritual position of

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Mon, Feb 11, 2019 at 2:55 AM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Devi

Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Brahmatirtha Das

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Kalakantha

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
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<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das  
<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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From Gaura Keshava pr:

Srila Prabhupada wanted to institute Varnashrama. But what kind of Varnashrama is compatible with Vaisnavism?

Vaisnava principles and doctrines do not always agree with Varnashrama ones. Varnashrama is a social system whereas Vaisnavism is a purely spiritual system. The doctrines of a spiritual system always take precedence over those which are only based on social considerations. The Varnashrama system if followed can elevate one to the mode of goodness over many lifetimes. The Vaisnava system can elevate one to liberation in one lifetime.

Practicing Vaisnavism can be helped by following some aspects of Varnashrama. However when Varnashrama rules restrict Vaisnavism they have to be given up.

The prime example of Vaisnava principles taking precedence over Varnashrama ones is the Vaisnava egalitarian principle of allowing access to the Vedas and Vedic mantras to those who are forbidden these under Varnashrama. Under traditional caste-by-birth Smarta (Asura) Varnashrama those not born male in the three higher castes (brahmin, ksatriya or vaisya) are denied access to the Vedas, Vedic knowledge, and Vedic mantras.

The Vedas means the books called Samhitas, Brahmanas Aranyakas and Upanisads also the philosophy of Vedanta in Vedanta Sutras. Hare Krishna mahamantra, Gopal mantra, Omkara, Om namo narayanaya, Sasvitri Gayatri and many other mantras chanted by Vaisnavas are contained in the Upanisads or Veda Samhitas. Very strict followers of traditional caste-by-birth Smarta (Asura) Varnashrama called Smartas deny all females and sudra/mlecca-born males access to this knowledge and the mantras contained within these sastras.

That means that Smartas deny all females and sudra/mlecca-born males can hear or chant Hare Krishna mahamantra, Gopal mantra, Omkara, Om namo narayanaya, Sasvitri Gayatri and many other mantras chanted by Vaisnavas. The rule that Smartas cite (from Manu Samhita) says that anyone of these classes must be killed by pouring molten lead into their ears if they hear any of these mantras and they should be killed by being impaled on spears if they chant those mantras. This is rejected by most Vaisnavas today of all sampradayas. Even Smartas today do not seriously suggest the killing of people for hearing or chanting these mantras. And yet the rule continues to be in sastra and taken seriously by all Smartas and even some Vaisnavas.

Smartas and some Vaisnavas therefore do not allow the persons of these unqualified by birth classes to learn, hear or chant these mantras. Though they don't actually try to kill them for doing so. So as a result they also say that such persons cannot themselves teach such mantras. Because they have no sastric rights (according to Manu Samhita) to receive them in the first place. Some sastras seem to take a middle path. They seem to say that these unqualified by birth classes can receive and chant such mantras but cannot teach them. This is hypocritical and is denied by strict Smartas and some Vaisnavas.

Anyway the caste system is the basis for the Varnashrama system so unless and until there is a caste or class system amongst people of a society any discussion of introducing or observing Varnashrama is a sham. Before any discussion of introducing any Varnashrama principle first one has to establish a system of Varnas and Ashramas in a given society. The first question after dividing society into Varnas and Ashrama designations is will all people still be allowed to receive, hear, chant and teach the Vedic knowledge and the mantras contained within the Vedas like Hare Krishna mahamantra, Gopal mantra, Omkara, Om namo narayanaya, Sasvitri Gayatri and many other mantras chanted by Vaisnavas.

ISKCON and Gaudiya Vaisnavism is based on the idea that the hearing and chanting of Hare Krishna mahamantra, Gopal mantra, Omkara, Om namo narayanaya, Sasvitri Gayatri and many other mantras chanted by Vaisnavas is open to all regardless of social position. Therefore logically ISKCON and Gaudiya Vaisnavism doesn't accept the traditional caste-by-birth Smarta (Asura) Varnashrama rule about restricting Vedic knowledge and mantras to only traivarnika-born males. :)

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**[Carl Woodham](#)**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 11, 2019 at 3:13 AM

Cc: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Devi Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Brahmatirtha Das <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Mahatma das <mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Many thanks to Gaura Keshava Prabhu for his informative letter (and to Srila Prabhupada for giving us the essence of the Vedas).

As a reminder to those who are following this extended email discussion, there is another Google group for SABHA members only. If you are not yet on it, Sati Mataji can help you join this confidential email discussion.

On this new Google Group a straw vote is underway concerning the GBC committee's VDG proposal. SABHA members have until Feb. 20 to give their non-binding straw vote in one of three ways:



Generally in favor  
Generally opposed  
Generally undecided.

Though 17 of our members have already voted, between now and Feb. 20th there is plenty of time for further discussion..

The results of this straw vote should be very helpful in our upcoming discussions in Mayapur.

Thank you. Hope to see you soon.

Your servant,  
Kalakantha das ACBSP

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Mon, Feb 11, 2019 at 3:50 AM

**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: pancaratnadas@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com

Cc: nrsimhananda@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu, krishnakirti@gmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com, sati.bts@gmail.com

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I find this quote interesting, and perhaps relevant to this discussion.



"Sri Narottama das Thakur says all sinful persons and suffering persons were delivered by the Sankirtan Movement inaugurated by Lord Chaitanya, Who was formerly the Son of Nanda Maharaj, accompanied by Nityananda Prabhu, Who was formerly Sri Balarama. If we keep ourselves purely on the standard of Lord Chaitanya's order, then chanting by us of the Holy Names of Krishna will descend as powerfully as He acted previously, during the time of Jagai and Madhai."

(Srila Prabhupada Letter, December 20, 1969)

As I understand it, "purely on the standard" means strict sadhana, exemplary behavior, fully engaged in purely motivated, service and regularly studying our books (i.e. a good understanding of our what Prabhupada is teaching us).

If this is the qualification to give a pure holy, i.e. a holy name that can give someone the same above qualifications, then wouldn't any initiated disciple of Prabhupada in good standing in Iskcon with the above qualifications be able to give a holy name in a diksa ceremony that would act purely? In other words, how would being a female in some way make the holy name impure if she is "purely on the standard?"

Of course, we have heard arguments as to why women cannot give diksa, even if qualified by the above standards, but perhaps the quote above can shed more light on the "qualifications," as did the quote of they symptoms of bhava that Sagar Maharaj presented.

Of course, we have the suniti and bharadwaj muni quotes, but those statements are not being taken by everyone in the same way that the opponents of vaisnavi diksa gurus are taking/presenting them (which I am sure is frustrating to them.)

The above offers another possible explanation of the qualifications of a harinama giving guru.

I agree with Pancaratna Prabhu that only giving first initiation is awkward, but that's the proposal that we are meant to give a

yes or no to.

In a message dated 2/10/2019 7:13:12 AM India Standard Time, [pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com) writes:

It seems that Gaur Keshav Prabhu thinks just because he calls those who oppose VDG, malcontent hypocrites and the offers a deluge of verses that he uses to confirm that Vaisnavi women may be diksha guru even though many of those verses don't specifically refer to diksha guru, that the reader will have to accept it, why because he is Gaur Keshav Prabhu.

The merry go round continues.

Also the letter from Bhakti Lata seems quite serious, I do know Madhav Sampradaya devotees that are not happy with iskcon setting new standards, though they somehow except that Prabhupada could do it, but to just say it must have been a man who wrote it because you did not like it and to not take it seriously and confirm the person and the point first is rather shallow in my mind.

Either way what stands out to me, as the issue is not complex is, why do we have to make the exception the rule. Keep the rule and make exceptions and everyone will get what they want. Everything else is just making it complex.

The position of diksha guru in ISKCON is losing its weight and becoming a formality. Soon it won't mean much if slowly anyone can do it. Men, women, disciples whose guru is still living, female or male. Some only first initiation some both. As long as they have not fallen down in the last five years is about the only qualification needed.

The GBC just gives an NOC but takes no responsibility,

this we should be discussing. How is it that they are the Ultimate Managerial Authority but for Diksha Guru they are not responsible. Any unqualified devotee who thinks such and such is a good devotee can request and GBC can give NOC, so the unqualified decide who should be guru. If we are not careful unqualified people will say that you just get diksha to connect to Prabhupada and he will do everything else, do you know, that's what some of our diksha gurus are saying even now .

The subcommittee says the VDG can give first but not second. And the disciple will then find a man to take second and then whose disciple will they be, the first guru or the second, the unqualified disciple should then choose to continue with the first or go with the second. And do we expect that they will decide by the power of spiritual knowledge or by some material conditioning. If you are going to change then change, if you make VDG, you make an exception, then they should give both.

Your servant pancaratna dasa

Sent from my MI MAX 2

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Wed, Feb 13, 2019 at 10:06 AM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das  
<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa  
<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,  
Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,  
BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha  
Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS  
(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"  
<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski  
<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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I'm addressing this to anyone, but especially to our guests in the discussion. What about the idea that we really cannot understand the shastras except through our guru? In other words, we find ourselves referring to many esoteric texts, but Srila Prabhupada is not physically here to give us the purports. Even some quotes from the part of the 10th and all of the 11th/12th Canto are not directly from him. His disciples and grand disciples are still guessing through imperfect senses. Why not only rely on what Srila Prabhupada has left for us in his books. If we relied only on his books - not audio, not letters - what would we get? Perhaps our mistake is that we think we can understand without the agency of the pure devotee. After all, Prabhupada did say that we should only read his books, no one else's,

and we took that instruction very seriously while he was physically present. A lot of controversies began when the Sat Sandarbha was translated. So many vehement arguments ensued about whether the soul had come from the Tatistha or Vaikuntha, etc. Maybe we should see what Srila Prabhupada, and Srila Prabhupada alone, tells us.

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Wed, Feb 13, 2019 at 5:10 PM



**Sati devi dasi**

<sati.bts@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear members of SABHA and guests,  
please accept my humble obeisance.  
All glory to Srila Prabhupada!

On request of Mother Rukmini, I copy-paste her today's email  
to this thread.

best regards,  
ys Sati dd

Dear Respected Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

History and sastra teach us that Lord Caitanya spread His Prema Sankirtana movement throughout India, even to those rejected by traditional Vedic society. Srila Prabhupada, the senapati acarya, in that same mood then spread the Lord's movement throughout the world.

We disciples and followers of Srila Prabhupada have all been born as papa yonayah. But, Srila Prabhupada, at great personal sacrifice, gave us all Krishna consciousness, the essence of the Vedas. Without Srila Prabhupada's extraordinary mercy, it's doubtful that any of us would be qualified to chant the Gayatri mantra, nor to understand the true essence of Vedic sources. More importantly, would any of us, from the East or the West, have given our lives to serving the mission of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu without Srila Prabhupada guidance and instruction?

We worship the Supreme Masculine Purusa, Sri Krsna, the saktiman. He is never separated from His divine prakriti, His daivishakti, His feminine counterpart, His compassionate nature, Sri Radha. In nature, all around us, there are the masculine and the feminine energies, even in flowers and trees. There is buddhi, analytical intelligence; and there is medha, emotional intelligence. These forces balance in nature. Both are created by God's design. Both have value in the Lord's plan. Both, are meant to be fully engaged in His service.

ISKCON's history has demonstrated that when the voices of women are silenced, when the opportunity for engaging women as fully respected members of our society is closed, the door for abusing women and children opens. What is more, we impoverish ourselves by neglecting the wisdom and practical insight that sometimes comes from only our mothers and grandmothers.

We say we are spirit souls and not these bodies. Yet, some in ISKCON make excessive distinctions between male and female bodies. Wherever this exists in ISKCON, intelligent men and women are discouraged from joining this sublime movement. Disturbed and repelled by this shortcoming, intelligent candidates for the mercy of Srila Prabhupada often join other yoga societies where they receive only a watered down version of Bhakti.

No one in this conversation is advocating an extreme "feminist" agenda. However, I find that some opponents of Vaisnavi Diksa Gurus objectify Vaisnavi preachers in an extreme way. We are presented with polarities instead of Prabhupada's philosophy. We are presented with two extremes of womanhood--pictures of women as mamas holding babies; or women holding machine guns or smoking cigarettes. Where is the scope in this world view to understand Prabhupada's Vaisnavi followers as he saw them; as preachers, those who Prabhupada called his "secret weapons" in spreading Lord Caitanya's movement?



It's also interesting to observe that those who write in favor of the issue we're discussing refer to "VDG" (Vaishnavi Diksa Gurus), and those opposing it usually refer to "FDG" (Female Diksa Gurus). I wonder, are we talking about these senior Vaisnavis, who have given their lives to the mission of Srila Prabhupada for forty or fifty years, as blessed servants of Srila Prabhupada? Or are we discussing the status of ordinary "females," who are lost in the modes of material nature?

Contrary to what opponents say, Vaishnava history is entirely on the VDG side. There have been great women teachers and gurus from the time of the earliest Upanisads, when Gargi debated the sage, Yajnavalka in the court of King Janaka. During the Bhakti renaissance that followed the appearance of Sri Caitanya, many previous Vedic norms were rejected, and among Lord Caitanya's exalted followers were women renunciates, as well as wives and daughters of other Gaudiya acaryas, such as Sita Thakurani and many, others, who had disciples. Urmila Devi, a disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, had hundreds of disciples at a Gaudiya Math branch in Jagannatha Puri. Even in that conservative region of India, no one objected. Most importantly, our own Founder-Acharya, Srila Prabhupada, upon returning to India in 1970 put his Vaishnavi disciples front and center, to lead kirtans and give lectures in his presence and in the presence of his senior male disciples.

Later His Divine Grace wrote in a letter meant to be distributed throughout ISKCON that, "All my sons and daughters" could, in the future, accept disciples.

Srila Prabhupada was always encouraging and protective of his Vaishnavi disciples. I personally experienced this with His Divine Grace on many occasions. Once in a public setting when he said all his devotees should open temples, I asked, "Even the girls, Srila Prabhupada?" He responded with an instruction I shall never forget: "When preaching Krishna consciousness there is no difference between the boys and girls." Then he discussed the great leadership of Sri Jahnava Devi in the times following Sri Caitanya.

When some extremist voices--against the direct instructions and mood of Srila Prabhupada--insist that Vaishnavis cannot give diksa, I feel neither encouraged nor protected. I simply feel broken-hearted and deeply miss Srila Prabhupada's wisdom, love and equanimity. And I pray that his mood, his vision, his desire to engage all his spiritual children in the Lord's service without prejudice or narrow-mindedness, will again manifest in his society.

Srila Prabhupada spoke about the blind and the lame- taking what was best in each culture and uplifting each of them in the best possible ways. This was his vision for ISKCON. For example, he commented that in the West there is appreciation for honest labor, as opposed to the sectarian demeaning of lower castes in India. He liked and valued that aspect of the West. And he welcomed disciples from the East and the West, of all colors, religions, backgrounds and genders to use all their talents, without discrimination, in the Lord's service.

Now, rather than taking the best of both worlds, some well-meaning but misguided devotees are trying to jump over Srila Prabhupada's application of transcendental Bhakti principles, daring to toss aside His Divine Grace's explicit statements about his Vaishnavi disciples. They do so on the basis of their interpretations of obscure Vedic sources.

Some insist "Vedic norms" are more important Srila Prabhupada's own mood and instructions, and that these "Vedic" ideas should now direct his international preaching mission. Even more insidious, is the implication that the "concessions" Srila Prabhupada made for preaching need to be corrected as we move forward into the future. How dare any follower of Srila Prabhupada say that he or she can "correct the concessions" he made! Which of us is defiant enough to reinterpret the direct instructions of our Founder-Acharya?

I am left to worry: Is Srila Prabhupada's great mission going to split into sectarian maths teaching various stripes of what they consider Vedic, while rejecting the broad vision, instructions, and global application given by our Founder-Acharya?

The story of Lord Caitanya's interaction with Amogha, the son-in-law of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, comes to mind. When he only wanted to demean the character of Sri Caitanya, Lord Caitanya came to him and touched his heart. He said, "the heart of a brahmin is a very pure place. How have you allowed envy to enter there?"

How have we allowed such mundane considerations to become so prominent in our hearts and our conversations? Why are saintly Vaisnavis, who have given heart and soul to Srila Prabhupada's service and the mission of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, being disrespected? Why are they being prohibited from serving their Guru Maharaja in a way that he ordered them? Is it possible that we have allowed envy or other mundane considerations to enter our hearts?

Who are we to step between the instructions of Srila Prabhupada and his dear daughters who today are themselves some of the most senior Vaisnavas in his movement?

For these reasons, I am in favor of the GBC committee's proposal regarding VDG and I urge all Sabha members to support it.

Hare Krsna,  
Your servant  
Rukmini dd (ACBSP)

with love,  
ys Sati dd

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Wed, Feb 13, 2019 at 6:36 PM



**[Bob Cohen](#)**

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>

To: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, David Shapiro  
<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,

janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Brilliant letter in all regards

bt

**From:** Sati devi dasi <[sati.bts@gmail.com](mailto:sati.bts@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 13, 2019 6:40 AM

**To:** David Shapiro <[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>

**Cc:** Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>; Pancaratna Dasa

<[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>; Visakha Dasi

<[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)>; Rukmini Walker

<[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)>; Bob Cohen

<[bobcohen@ivs.edu](mailto:bobcohen@ivs.edu)>; Krishna Kirti Das

<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>; Damodara Dasa

<[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>; Krishnarupa Dasi

<[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>; Carl Woodham

<[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>; Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>; Prabhupada dasa b.

<[pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com)>; Narahari

<[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com)>; Richard Hall

<[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com)>; Ajita Cozzi <[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com)>;

Atmanivedana Swami <[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net)>;

BB Keshava Swami <[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com)>; Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com)>; BDDS (Bhakti

Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)

<[BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net)>; Chris Ostrowski

<[chandraswami108@hotmail.com](mailto:chandraswami108@hotmail.com)>; Dhruva Kusa Shah

<[dhruva.k.108@gmail.com](mailto:dhruva.k.108@gmail.com)>; Divya Priya

<[divyajps@yahoo.com](mailto:divyajps@yahoo.com)>; Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA) <[Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net)>; Kratu Das

<[Kratudas108@yahoo.com](mailto:Kratudas108@yahoo.com)>; Madhuri Pura Dasa

<[mpd.vda@gmail.com](mailto:mpd.vda@gmail.com)>; Mahaman (das) ACBSP

<[Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net)>; Mahatma Das

<[mahatmadasa@gmail.com](mailto:mahatmadasa@gmail.com)>; rucira dasi

<[ruciradasi@gmail.com](mailto:ruciradasi@gmail.com)>; 徐达斯 <[siddha\\_007@163.com](mailto:siddha_007@163.com)>;

janavi devi <[janavidevi@hotmail.com](mailto:janavidevi@hotmail.com)>; Sri Oppecini

<[sriradhita@gmail.com](mailto:sriradhita@gmail.com)>; Vrnda dd <[vrnda16@icloud.com](mailto:vrnda16@icloud.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Vaisnavi Gurus? The SABHA Weighs In/

## SABHA's non-confidential discussion

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your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

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Wed, Feb 13, 2019 at 7:29 PM

**Bob Cohen**

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>

To: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Dear Esteemed SABHA colleagues

Please find below well thought out paper by Yogesvara Prabhu on the Vaishnavi Guru issue. I found this most insightful

Yours in service

Brahmatirtha das

June 28, 2018

Dear Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

For some time I have been confused about why the GBC has not yet endorsed any women gurus. To better educate myself, I spoke with six senior devotees: three in favor, three opposed or uncertain. Here is a summary of what I learned, along with some personal reflections.

Let me be clear: I am far from neutral on this topic. To deny a qualified woman devotee the right to initiate has always struck me as a dangerous mistake that can lead to divisions within ISKCON and empower unqualified candidates to begin initiating on their own, a situation that had sadly already begun. But I never researched the opposing arguments. Was I wrong to think the way I did? I wanted to find out, and my conversations were enlightening on many levels.

I will not attempt to recap the long and convoluted history of this issue as it was explained to me. Briefly, it seems there was an agreement on principle to approve, going back to around 2012. The vote was not unanimous, however, and implementation stalled. A proposal was again made in 2016 to move forward but to restrict the territory to North America. That was voted down based on a concern that it would not work to limit an ISKCON policy to a particular geographic area. The issue has been frozen since then. I am led to believe there will be another meeting later this month to discuss the matter further, after which it will be addressed in Mayapur in October, and then again in the spring of 2019. Why conversations are strung out over such a lengthy timeframe is unclear.

I won't attempt to argue either the virtues of women in decision-making positions or the necessity of allowing them to

do so. That has been done by more eloquent writers. What commands my attention here is the nature of opposing arguments: the way in which the issue of women gurus has been presented to me. The sincerity of the dissenting devotees with whom I spoke is beyond question. These are longstanding ISKCON members whose contributions to Srila Prabhupada's movement speak for themselves. Still, on the issue of women gurus their arguments draw heavily on historic precedent—e.g. it didn't happen during Srila Prabhupada's time—and that is a concern. Nothing changes so frequently as our understanding of history: ten people asked to describe an historic event will present ten different interpretations. Even the most incontestable of historic events yields to evolving definition. When first signed, the Bill of Rights clearly declared, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal..." It took generations of analysis and deliberation by people of good faith to determine that this "self-evident truth" included women, people of color, and citizens of other nations. "All men" may have been self-evident then, but over time its meaning has grown richer and more inclusive.

That is the glory of our noble Vaishnava tradition: its meaning grows richer over time. The centrality of Radha in our theology, the expansion of sankirtan from chanting to book distribution, the growth of Krishna consciousness online—none of this was there at the outset of Vaishnava culture or foretold in the teachings of our predecessors. No one predicted the internet. I'm enamored with Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's response to a congregant who objected to his innovative use of festivals to attract people to Krishna consciousness. "It is not the way things were done in the past," the congregant argued. "The Ganges has shifted course over time," Srila Bhaktisiddhanta replied. "If you insist on bathing in the old bed, arguing that 'this is where we have always done it,' then what can be said for you?"



The risk to Srila Prabhupada's mission is not women gurus but the precarious manner in which women are being excluded from consideration: "because this is the way we've always done it." On the pretext of defending parampara precedent, the spirit of the parampara is being trampled. And this may have troubling ramifications for the future. We may, I believe, reasonably anticipate schisms arising over this issue. If flexibility is not built into a structure—whether it is the structure of buildings or institutions—at some point the structure will break. Even if someone is opposed on principle to women gurus, he must acknowledge that insisting on that position will have deleterious consequences for the future of ISKCON. ISKCON's leaders are obliged to consider what Thomas Aquinas called a *secundum quid*, a second level of importance: beyond being right, is it righteous? The strength of our Vaishnava community is not in asserting the rightness of our position (the "self-evident truth" of our position) but in recognizing the righteousness in going a different way.

Let me summarize a few of the points raised in the conversations mentioned above.

The opposing devotees with whom I spoke candidly agreed that there are precedents in Gaudiya Vaishnava history for women gurus. They readily agreed as well that on several occasions Srila Prabhupada did seem to endorse women gurus. In letters Srila

Prabhupada wrote, "My sons and daughters will initiate," and he replied to late Professor Joseph O'Connell's question about women gurus in ISKCON by saying, "Yes, some, a few, not many."

These citations, according to the opposing devotees, are insufficient for approving women gurus in ISKCON. One devotee mentioned the story of Dhruva in *Bhagavatam*, which concludes that "Suniti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva



Maharaja's diksa-guru” (see verse and purport to SB 4.12.32). “So, yes, on principle there can be women gurus,” this devotee commented with reference to this verse, “but the greater issue is: What are our social roles? We should establish that first, before making exceptions.”

This was a revealing comment. This devotee had set for himself a concretized definition of what men do and what women do (“this is how it has always been done”). “If it was important,” he continued, “why didn’t Srila Prabhupada appoint any women gurus in his lifetime? We want to be careful about setting a precedent that he did not set himself.” He then conceded that “men are usually the problem,” and that “women are ahead here” in the problem-solving arena, suggesting that women do have some salutary skills. He did not find those skills sufficient for justifying the introduction of women gurus in ISKCON. “I want to roll on Srila Prabhupada’s model,” is how he phrased it.

One of the other dissenting devotees took a more strident position, calling the introduction of women gurus a “Trojan horse.” In his estimation, women gurus would be the crack in the wall that would allow armies of feminists and liberals to penetrate and take over ISKCON.

Such arguments are not as specious as they may seem: they deserve careful consideration. From the outset, many of the greatest threats to ISKCON’s integrity—be it the “Prabhupada is Krishna” uprising of the late 1960s, the “gopi-bhava clubs” of the 1970s whose followers argued that *madhurya-rasa* is the true focus of devotional life, the regional guru assertions of the 1980s, or the ritvik schisms that have divided the Society for so long—all involved interpretation of the protocols established by Srila Prabhupada. Over time, and to some degree as a reaction to these threats, a romanticized image of the “true” ISKCON order emerged, predicated on a social ideal

fixed in historic time. What was “true” then, this vision holds, is how “true” must be defined today. Advocates of this model reject the idea that ISKCON can serve as an arena in which evolving social interests are acknowledged and discussed. In their eyes the body politic should be a harmonious, indivisible whole, predicated on a literal interpretation of the past, and there can be no such thing as “loyal” opposition.

By extension, our social roles have also been fixed in historic time. What was

“true” in previous yugas for Suniti and other women must hold true today, for there can be no duality in the Absolute. Some viable religious communities do indeed operate on this notion of a fixed rigid Absolute, set within a fixed rigid communal structure. The

Amish and Hasidim come quickly to mind, although one may wonder how much impact these groups have, given their unwillingness to acknowledge the direction of history.

The Supreme Court confronts similar debate, and it is a healthy exercise. In legal terminology, those who advocate literal interpretation of the Constitution are called “originalists.” The value of originalism is that it reduces the likelihood that outsiders will seize power from elected representatives. Originalism seeks to preserve the authority of the Court and guard against anyone imposing their own subjective or elitist values on the law. Originalism respects precedent as binding (*stare decisis*) and forces reformers to reconsider and possibly repeal or amend their own bad ideas. In my old age, I have come to respect the “originalists” in ISKCON as guardians of the tradition, Switzers at the gates of the Vatican protecting the halls of faith from intrusion by liberals like me.

There are nonetheless arguments against originalism that deserve consideration, as they point to a middle ground between blind obedience and rebellion. For instance,

“non-originalists” (also called “pragmatists”) argue that framers of the Constitution did not intend for their specific intentions, formulated in their time, to control interpretation in the future. No governing body can accurately anticipate all future developments, and it will be necessary, the founders knew, for reasonable judges to adjust Constitutional applications accordingly. Non-originalists propose allowing for changing meaning over time and for supporting the result that will best promote the public good. It was such non-originalist thinking that allowed the Constitution to encompass the equal treatment of blacks, women, and other minorities.

With regard to women gurus, some ISKCON decision-makers seem reluctant to make the analogous changes-over-time to rules governing who can initiate, and their reluctance, I am sure, is motivated by their love for Srila Prabhupada. No one wants to be remembered as the person who changed “the way Prabhupada did it,” no one wants to be the culprit who destroyed the *parampara*. Those who object to women gurus are unwilling to assume the risk of change. If something goes wrong, let it be laid at the doorstep of future generations. It is not our job to “promote the public good.” We are here to defend tradition. Thank goodness previous generations of *acharyas* had greater courage. We would never have encountered Krishna Consciousness if predecessor gurus had declined to take risks.

The dissenters I spoke with were candid, their positions were heartfelt, and their intentions noble, but if we reflect on the potential consequences of such noble intentions, the picture is quite chilling. One risk of insisting on an originalist interpretation of how ISKCON should be governed—of not allowing for changing meaning over time— is losing sight of the very society we seek to serve: of becoming even more irrelevant to world events than we are currently. The other, greater risk is even more disturbing: losing control of Srila Prabhupada’s mission. When reaction to injustice raises its fist,

the results can be devastating.

Rather than debating whether women can both have children and guide disciples, should we not focus on becoming the relevant, inclusive, and meaningful society Srila Prabhupada always desired?

Your servant,

Yogesvara dasa

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Wed, Feb 13, 2019 at 8:38 PM



**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

Cc: Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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That's a beautiful letter from the heart of a dear devotee. It kind of sums up the dilemma.

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Thu, Feb 14, 2019 at 3:29 AM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: nrsimhananda@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu

Cc: sati.bts@gmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
dasivisakha@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
krishnakirti@gmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com,  
krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com,  
brss108@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Prabhupada's compassionate heart was the reason he made adjustments. He wanted to facilitate as many people coming to Krishna as possible. So although we might say that allowing woman to initiate is an exception, making adjustments to give service opportunities or to make more people Krishna conscious was certainly not the exception, but the rule.

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Thu, Feb 14, 2019 at 4:37 AM

**Mahatma Das**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: nrsimhananda@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu

Cc: sati.bts@gmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Dear Brahmatirtha Prabhu,

Could you ask Yogesvara Prabhu to elaborate a bit on the following statements he made.

Your servant,  
Mahatma das

PS I appreciated the article even though my questions look like I am arguing. I just want to get a little more clarity on his points.

“To deny a qualified woman devotee the right to initiate has always struck me as a dangerous mistake that can lead to divisions within ISKCON and empower unqualified candidates to begin initiating on their own, a situation that had sadly already begun.”



How would not letting women initiate empower unqualified male candidates, or is he just referring to women become gurus on their own?

"If flexibility is not built into a structure—whether it is the structure of buildings or institutions—at some point the structure will break. Even if someone is opposed on principle to women gurus, he must acknowledge that insisting on that position will have deleterious consequences for the future of ISKCON."

What about the argument that we can't compromise our principles just to please the public, even if it would attract more people? (Of course, this assumes allowing women to be gurus is a compromise of principles, but some devotees believe it is.)

"ISKCON's leaders are obliged to consider what Thomas Aquinas called a *secundum quid*, a second level of importance: beyond being right, is it righteous? The strength of our Vaishnava community is not in asserting the rightness of our position (the "self-evident truth" of our position) but in recognizing the righteousness in going a different way."

The argument would be that we are interested in following guru, sadhu and sastra, not mundane morality, a manmade morality that is continually changing. How would be address this argument?

"The other, greater risk is even more disturbing: losing control of Srila Prabhupada's mission. When reaction to injustice raises its fist, the results can be devastating."

Could he explain this further?

Thank you.

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Thu, Feb 14, 2019 at 5:06 AM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,  
BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net,  
Kratudas108@yahoo.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net,  
ajitacozzi@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com,  
bbks108@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu, brss108@gmail.com,  
carlwoodham@gmail.com, chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com,  
dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com,  
janardanagkg@gmail.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
krishnakirti@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
pdb108@yahoo.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com,  
vrnda16@icloud.com

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From Gaura Keshava Pr on Varnashrama:

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Thu, Feb 14, 2019 at 7:55 PM



**[Carl Woodham](#)**

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira  
Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, BR

Sagar Swami <brss108@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, janavi devi

<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Lon Solomon

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>,  
Lana Morozova <sati.bts@gmail.com>, 徐达斯

<siddha\_007@163.com>, Sri <sriradhita@gmail.com>,  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>

Suresvara Dasa <suresvara@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>

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H.H. Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Maharaja has sent a thoughtful letter to our group regarding VDG. His views nicely illustrate the cultural divide we face as so well described in Yogesvara Prabhu's recently posted essay. Maharaja has raised several key points to which I'll reply as concisely as possible. They are:

1. Dr. Thomas Hopkins
2. Siva and Parvati
3. Vaishnavis in North America
4. Gentlemanly Behavior

1. Dr. Hopkins is indeed a great scholar and friend of ISKCON. Sometime after I first met him in 1976 he commented that Srila Prabhupada was so well documented that it would create problems, for what he says in one setting may appear to contradict what he says elsewhere. This could be said of Dr. Hopkins as well, for his comment as quoted by Maharaja superficially contradicts his filmed comments in the video "She Can Become Guru" (on YouTube) in which he praises Srila Prabhupada for establishing spiritual gender equity in ISKCON.

2. Lord Siva had to correct Parvati for cursing Citraketu. Later in the Bhagavatam, Parvati had to restrain Lord Sive from killing his brother Bhrigu. Men have buddhi. Women have medha (BG 10.34). Both kinds of intelligence are needed. That women generally have less buddhi intelligence does not make them inferior to men .

3. The history of Vaishnavis in North America is brutally painful but must be told if we are to understand the significance of VDGs in ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada was proudly liberal about his treatment of women in ISKCON. In CC he describes his female followers as "As good as their brothers." Sadly, Vaishnavis have not been treated that way in ISKCON. Vaishnavis in North America have been denigrated as less intelligent and so thoroughly discouraged from such activities as giving class that many of our learned and qualified Godsisters to this day still choke and are unable to speak in public. Even worse, male ISKCON leaders have engaged Vaishnavis in 100% un-Vedic services such as collecting money in bars long after midnight. In many cases, to maximize collections, Vaishnavis were encouraged and pressured to minimize their time with their children, resulting in unspeakably tragic abuse and psychological damage. It is ironic that much of the money raised by Vaishnavis in North America went to build the seminal ISKCON temples in Mumbai, Mayapur and Vrindavan. Now, some leaders in ISKCON India denigrate these same Vaishnavis who raised those funds by challenging their inherent qualification to initiate disciples. Some accuse these staunch, faithful female disciples of Srila Prabhupada of being unchaste unless they now practice the Stri-dharma they were encouraged and even forced to abandon in their youth for the sake of ISKCON fundraising. Does this seem like a good example of adding insult to injury?

4. When Srila Prabhupada came to Gainesville in 1971 he was asked by a television interviewer how one could identify his true follower. Srila Prabhupada said, "He is a perfect gentleman." Webster's defines 'gentleman' as one who combines rank with chivalrous qualities. Even if he is a social superior, chivalrous gentleman will always take the feelings of women into consideration. Virtually no women in ISKCON, Prabhupada's disciples and otherwise, support the anti-VDG position.\* They find it insulting. To gentlemen,, what Vaishnavis think DOES matter. Once Srila Prabhupada was asked to speak on Gandhi Jayanti. In discussing non-violence he pointed out that not allowing a person to serve God according to their propensity was the worst kind of violence. To deny qualified Vaishnavis in ISKCON full facility to preach, as is offered to their brothers, is a prime example of violence. In ISKCON, women are supposed to be protected. Gentlemen must speak up, even it means being insulted, cursed and physically threatened.

Very few ISKCON Vaishnavis want to initiate anyway (just as less than 3% of Srila Prabhupada's male disciples do), but to say that Madhyama Vaishnavas are categorically inferior than Madhyama Vaishnavas hardly seems gentlemanly.

Your servant,  
Kalakantha das ACBSP

\* In 2012 over 400 devotees from around the world submitted to the GBC a pro-VDG petition. In a 2015 survey, over 80% of 550 respondents favored VDG is ISKCON. Anti-VDG spokesmen attempt to speculatively discredit these expressions of strong pro-VDG perspectives in ISKCON, but we must note that the anti-VDG side have shown none of their own. Thus SABHA, as a representative body of greater ISKCON, should support the GBC's proposed position to allow Vaishnavis to give first initiation in ISKCON. Many may want Vaishnavis to give second initiation also, but allowing first initiations by Vaishnavis is an important acknowledgement of their spiritual value and shows respect and appreciation of Vaishnavis sacrifice and service to Srila Prabhupada and ISKCON.

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Thu, Feb 14, 2019 at 8:31 PM

**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>

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Damodara Prabhu and I have been very busy the last week here in Mayapura.

So, this is catching up on much correspondence.

In response to Maharaja's suggestion for shastra-based criteria (it's in the right direction), I would add the criterion that the bhava stage is rare. (Bhakti-rasamtrita-sindhu 1.1.17):

*kleśa-ghnī śubhadā mokṣa- laghutā-kṛt sudurlabhā*

***sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca sā***

The six characteristics of pure devotional service enumerated in the above verse are listed in the *Nectar of Devotion* (chapter 1): (1) Pure devotional service brings immediate relief from all kinds of material distress. (2) Pure devotional service is the beginning of all auspiciousness. (3) Those in pure devotional service deride even the conception of liberation. (4) Pure devotional service is rarely achieved. (5) Pure devotional service automatically puts one in transcendental pleasure. (6) Pure devotional service is the only means to attract Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states in his commentary to the above verse:

*bhāva-bhaktir mokṣa-laghutā-kṛd-rūpā sudurlabhā-rūpā ca*

The two characteristics, *mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt* and *sudurlabhā*, are manifested at the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*; i.e. *bhāva-bhakti* is very rarely attainable and is beyond liberation.

So, we aren't talking about someone who happens just to be a very good devotee. You are talking about someone who is beyond the liberated stage.

And then we also see that even those at the bhava stage and beyond also tend to follow varnasrama. Why, because Krishna Himself says that liberated people who have no duty to perform should nonetheless do so to guide ordinary people. That's why Lord Krishna says that if he were to not perform prescribed duties, everyone would follow Him and bring about a varnasankara society.

Rare doesn't mean just uncommon. It's like the appearance of someone like Srila Prabhupada or Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. It's that uncommon -- too uncommon to describe in terms like 3% or 2% of the population. They are practically unique events.

So, add "extremely rare" to the below list.

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

On Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 12:13 PM Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear devotees. Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

I thought of the scriptural reference which could serve as a common ground to for both parties, since the anti-VDG group is insisting that the VDG candidate must be at least on the bhāva platform. This is a well-known passage from NOD 18 on the subject:

“Rūpa Gosvāmī next describes the characteristics of a person who has actually developed his ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. The characteristics are as follows:

1. He is always anxious to utilize his time in the devotional service of the Lord. He does not like to be idle. He wants service always, twenty-four hours a day, without deviation.

2. He is always reserved and perseverant.
3. He is always detached from all material attraction.
4. He does not long for any material respect in return for his activities.
5. He is always certain that Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy upon him.
6. He is always very eager to serve the Lord faithfully.
7. He is very much attached to the chanting of the holy names of the Lord.
8. He is always eager to describe the transcendental qualities of the Lord.
9. He is very pleased to live in a place where the Lord's pastimes are performed, e.g., Mathurā, Vṛndāvana or Dvārakā.”

Can we agree that the VDG candidates should be accepted by the GBC on this basis?

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

On 7 Feb 2019, at 10:42, Krishna Kirti Das  
<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Nrsimhananda Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

On Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 6:17 AM David Shapiro  
<[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)> wrote:

Opps. BPVS noticed that I cited a ritvik website as a reference. I didn't read down that far. I was just looking for the quote from TKG. My bad. By the way, riviks make the mistake of taking one quote of Srila Prabhupada to justify their position without weighing everything else that he wrote, said, and did - especially in reference to shastras. I believe that we have to look at the big picture of SP's instructions as we have been doing in this conference. Only then will the correct answer become obvious.

||  
||



|||

This is precisely our criticism of the pro-FDG side of this debate. They take the Jan 3 letter to Hamsaduta as it if were the only evidence, not considering what else Srila Prabhupada said on the issue of female diksa-gurus, what to speak of not considering what our acharyas and our shastras say.

Basically, those in favor of FDG have said, "This letter of Jan 3 1969 is our evidence, and whatever else he might have said against it doesn't really count." But that's *exactly* how the ritviks argued their case. They said, "This letter of July 9 1977 is our evidence, and whatever else he might have said against it doesn't really count." The hermeneutical approach used by both is, fundamentally, highly selective. It is an extensive exercise in cherry-picking. And therefore the conclusions reached by both are unauthorized.

Our main objection to the pro-FDG position, as with the ritvik position, is that its hermeneutical method is faulty and not in line with the method that Srila Prabhupada taught us. It delivers only the cherry-picked words of guru, and perhaps some sadhu and shastra--also cherry-picked IF they support the conclusion already reached. The ritviks use the exact same method.

So, the big difference between our sides on this matter is that the pro-FDG camp relies on cherry-picking its evidence. We don't. That's the fundamental difference.

Therefore in the papers we have presented thus far, we have gone to great lengths to explain what is our method and why it is authorized. Please see the attached paper. (I am not sure if we have sent it before,

but if not, here it is.) This link goes to our web page, where all our papers can be downloaded: [https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page\\_id=826](https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?page_id=826)

Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa  
<harinam\_diksa\_and\_fdg final.pdf>

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Thu, Feb 14, 2019 at 9:39 PM



**Krishna Kirti Das**

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>

To: Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>

Cc: Nrsimhananda das David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Brahmatirtha Das

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Kalakantha

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Mahatma das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Devi Dasi

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Suresvara

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, Drutakarma das

<Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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On Fri, Feb 8, 2019 at 10:15 PM Visakha Dasi

<[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)> wrote:

Regarding my participation, I offer these points:

1. As Gaura Keshava Prabhu mentioned, the issue is not complex. The anti-FDG members are making it appear complex and taking a tremendous amount of their time and our time in doing so.

The labels you and Gaura Keshava are applying are misleading.

Firstly, our view does allow for women to be diksa-guru. You can't say it doesn't. So how can you call it "anti-FDG"? That is misleading.

Secondly, our view is based on guru AND sadhu AND shastra. That is, our view is based on all three pramanas, and we have shown that all of Srila Prabhupada's statement regarding women as diksa-guru (there are only four statements he has made, no more). We have taken ALL of Srila Prabhupada's statements into account whereas you just pick the ones that support your idea or leave aside those that don't. Your evidence is selective.

Example: SB 4.20.12, where Srila Prabhupada says Suniti could not become Dhruva's diksa-guru on account of her being a woman. It's simply not a part of your calculus.

Therefore, the real positions in this are not pro-VDG or anti-VDG but the system of pramana (hermeneutics) you employ. Quite simply put, your method is selective, speculative and not according to the way that Srila Prabhupada taught (for example, see CC Madhya 20.352 regarding the centrality of shastra).

Because your method is not according to what Srila Prabhupada taught, your conclusions are unauthorized.

2. Why do we need to turn to the standards of the Sri Sampradaya? Whatever their standard may be, it is not our sampradaya. Answers to this question are found in our sampradaya.

Where does it say that Narada Pancharatra is a Sri Vaisnava shastra? That is a silly idea.

Srila Prabhupada in many places says that Narada Pancaratra is our authority. Our system of pancharatrika initiations is based on Narada Pancaratra. That we have demonstrated in our papers.

3. The power of bhakti supersedes all material disqualifications.

But there are still different stages within bhakti, and in the lower stages, one is obliged to follow the srutis, smritis, puranas, and pancaratras. It's not that as soon as you get initiated you are free from all these.

That is why in the world today we have former mleccas — meat eaters — who are initiating people into the Brahma

Madhva Gaudiya sampradaya. And this power of bhakti can be present regardless of one's body. From Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.7.46:

"Surrendered souls, even from groups leading sinful lives, such as women, the laborer class, the mountaineers and the Sabaras, or even the birds and beasts, can also know about the science of Godhead and become liberated from the clutches of the illusory energy by surrendering unto the pure devotees of the Lord and by following in their footsteps in devotional service."

Surrendering means following their instructions, which according to Srila Rupa Goswami means following sruti smriti purana, panchartra. Surrender doesn't exempt you from these.

4. There is no indication from Srila Prabhupada teachings that the qualifications of those who initiate is different for men than for women. In fact, the opposite. The indications are that the qualifications are the same for both, as stated in Caitanya-caritamrita Madhya 18.121-122:

strī-bāla-vṛddha, āra 'caṇḍāla' 'yavana'  
yei tomāra eka-bāra pāya daraśana  
kṛṣṇa-nāma laya, nāce hañā unmatta  
ācārya ha-ila sei, tārila jagata

SYNONYMS

strī—women; bāla—children; vṛddha—old men; āra—and;  
caṇḍāla—the lowest of men; yavana—persons who eat meat; yei  
—anyone who; tomāra—Your; eka-bāra—once; pāya daraśana—  
gets the sight; kṛṣṇa-nāma—the holy name of Kṛṣṇa; laya—  
chants; nāce—dances; hañā unmatta—like a madman; ācārya ha-  
ila—becomes a spiritual master; sei—that man; tārila jagata—  
delivers the whole world.

## TRANSLATION

"If they see You just once, even women, children, old men, meat-eaters and members of the lowest caste immediately chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, dance like madmen and become spiritual masters capable of delivering the whole world."

You failed to mention the verse before this, which says that these people by the mercy of the Lord have come to the level of Krishna prema:

--- quote ---

*alaukika 'prakṛti' tomāra — buddhi-agocara  
tomā dekhi' kṛṣṇa-preme jagat pāgala*

Synonyms:

*alaukika* — uncommon; *prakṛti* — characteristics; *tomāra* — Your; *buddhi-agocara* — beyond our imagination; *tomā dekhi'* — by seeing You; *kṛṣṇa-preme* — in ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa; *jagat* — the whole world; *pāgala* — mad.

Translation:

**"Indeed, Your characteristics are uncommon and beyond the imagination of an ordinary living being. Simply by seeing You, the entire universe becomes mad with ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.**

--- end quote --

So, they are on the level of ecstatic love for Krishna. By the merciful glance of Caitanya-mahaprabhu, they have become siddha. In this case, they are kripa-siddha.

So, the verse you quoted nicely supports what we say, is that they are eligible because they are siddha.

*kim apy atrābhijāyante yoginaḥ sarva-yoniṣu |  
pratyakṣitātma-nāthānām naiṣāṁ cintyaṁ kulādikam ||44||*

"But, because perfect yogis (or *nitya-siddha* devotees) who are on the stage of *yoga-pratyakṣa* (i.e. are self-realized – seeing God face-to-face), *pratyakṣitātma-nāthānām*, may take birth in any family tradition, in such cases no consideration of *kula*, gender, etc. as mentioned earlier apply (they can become *ācāryas*)."

Thank you very much.



Your servant, Krishna-kirti Dasa

p.s. Your argument failed because of cherry-picking your verses. Your method is unauthorized. Again, our differences are over are methods for understanding.

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your servant,  
Visakha Dasi

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not applicable to ISKCON today.

So regarding Krishna Dharmas email:

Will it be a "calamity"? So far every time the GBC tries to interfere in the natural sastric system it seems there are calamities. In this case we have at least one proposed VDG (Vaisnavi Diksha Guru i.e. Urmila devi dasi) who is traveling around the world arguably preaching much more than many male devotees and attracting sincere persons who have gained faith in her and are waiting years to take diksha from her. It's been decades since the GBC passed resolutions accepting VDGs. And justice delayed is justice denied.

I agree with Krishna Dharma prabhu. Who's business is it anyway? If all persons involved are following the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, 4 regs and 16 rounds and are loyal to ISKCON, what business is it of a few malcontents who want to interfere? Let them concentrate on their own spiritual lives which are not effected in the least by VDGs initiating in ISKCON. If VDGs are so bad then everyone will see that and no one will gain faith in them and want to take diksha from them.

The very same sastric references given by the malcontents to show that women cannot be gurus also state that sudra born or mlecca born (antya-ja, lit. of other birth) are also rejected. Why do the malcontents ONLY care about opposing women gurus, their quotes also declare that no person born a sudra or mlecca can also be guru. They are nothing but hypocrites. This is called ardha kukuta nyaya. Or accepting only half the hen i.e. the part that lays eggs, but not feeding the other end. The fact is that accepting quotes that deny women the possibility to be diksha gurus means also automatically denying men not born in dvija families also (practically all present ISKCON gurus, is there even any ISKCON guru born in a brahmin family?)

Obviously the GBC cannot accept their sastric quotes AS IS, because to do so would mean they have to accept only gurus born in brahmin (dvija i.e. brahmin, ksatriya or vaisya) families. LOL!

Therefore the malcontents MOVE THE GOAL POSTS. They assume that sudra and mlecca born males can be elevated to be qualified to give Vaisnava diksha by themselves taking Vaisnava diksha, but they deny that brahmin, ksatriya, vaisya, or sudra or mlecca born women can similarly be elevated to be qualified to give Vaisnava diksha by taking Vaisnava diksha. Did Srila Prabhupada even say such a thing? NO, never. In fact he said the exact opposite. The malcontents normally do not quote the full context when Srila Prabhupada makes these statements. They take very minimal quotations and present them as a SMOKE SCREEN so that people do not understand the full purport of his statements, for example:

Interview with Professors O'Connell, Motilal and Shivaram —  
June 18, 1976, Toronto

OF COURSE, BECAUSE SUPERFICIALLY, BODILY, THERE IS SOME DISTINCTION, SO WE KEEP WOMEN SEPARATELY FROM MEN, THAT'S ALL. OTHERWISE, THE RIGHTS ARE THE SAME...IF SHE IS ABLE TO GO TO THE HIGHEST PERFECTION OF LIFE, WHY IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BECOME GURU? BUT, NOT SO MANY. ACTUALLY ONE WHO HAS ATTAINED THE PERFECTION, SHE CAN BECOME GURU. BUT MAN OR WOMAN, UNLESS ONE HAS ATTAINED THE PERFECTION... YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA. SEI GURU HAYA [CC. MADHYA 8.128]. THE QUALIFICATION OF GURU IS THAT HE MUST BE FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE SCIENCE OF KR.S.N.A. THEN HE OR SHE CAN BECOME GURU. YEI KR.S.N.A-TATTVA-VETTA., SEI GURU HAYA. [BREAK] IN OUR MATERIAL WORLD, IS IT ANY PROHIBITION THAT WOMAN CANNOT BECOME PROFESSOR? IF SHE IS QUALIFIED, SHE CAN BECOME PROFESSOR. WHAT IS THE WRONG THERE? SHE MUST BE QUALIFIED. THAT IS THE POSITION. SO SIMILARLY, IF THE WOMAN UNDERSTANDS KR.S.N.A CONSCIOUSNESS PERFECTLY, SHE CAN BECOME GURU.

The malcontents only quote:

If she is able to go to the highest perfection of life, why it is not possible to become guru? But, not so many. Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru.

They leave out:

Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same.

and

But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection... Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kr.s.n.a. Then he or she can become guru. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta., sei guru haya. [break]

and

In our material world, is it any prohibition that woman cannot become professor? If she is qualified, she can become professor. What is the wrong there? She must be qualified. That is the position. So similarly, if the woman understands Kr.s.n.a consciousness perfectly, she can become guru.

Above I give the full quote so that everyone can understand that the purport of Srila Prabhupadas full statement is that the qualification for guru is EXACTLY

THE SAME for men and women. Yei kr.s.n.a-tattva-vetta. sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]

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Fri, Feb 15, 2019 at 6:03 AM

**Krishnarupa Dasi**

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>,  
janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Dear esteemed SABHA members

Dandavat pranams. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

If a qualified devotee in a female body may be able to give Hari Nama diksa, but cannot bestow second initiation because she is not wearing a 'brahmana' thread and therefore cannot give brahman initiation, seems very odd to me. She has been given the gayatri mantra by Srila Prabhupada, and therefore as far as I am concerned, she is qualified to give second initiation. The brahmin thread is an incidental; the gayatri mantra is the key.

Otherwise there will be a terrible mish-mash of a devotee having two living gurus at the same time! Is that not against our precepts?

I am on the side of those in the debate who would like what Srila Prabhupada is saying about the issue to have the most weight. After all, Srila Prabhupada indeed was so visionary he broke with 'tradition' by having young men and women live in the temples and serve together. In fact, we know that he said this was one of the reasons why he was so successful in spreading Krishna consciousness. He further broke with tradition to give his female disciples brahmin initiation and it was not, as some say, to 'assuage the egos of western females'. Saying that is offensive to Srila Prabhupada – as if he were a diplomat and not the Senapati Bhakta.

Why are we relying heavily on other sampradaya's opinions? We see that female gurus have figured in our Gaudiya Madhva Sampradaya (although not many).

Anyway, just saying ...

yr sr  
Krishnarupa dd

**Krishne matir astu**  
**Women's Minister**  
**ISKCON Australia**  
**National Council Member**  
**SABHA Member**

0416 17 97 33  
India: +91 8101 485 058  
Skype: Carolkr1  
[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)

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Fri, Feb 15, 2019 at 6:10 AM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>,  
Pancaratra Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada  
dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi  
<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>,  
Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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I posted this vital question of Krishnarupa dd earlier. How r we expected to understand ancient shastra except through our spiritual master? Prabhupada's purports are the window through which we see the landscape of spiritual understanding. Is it not a mistake to "jump over the spiritual master" to try to understand shastras. Shouldn't we be inspecting the issue solely on what SP said?

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Fri, Feb 15, 2019 at 10:14 AM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski



<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa  
<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los  
Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das  
<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das  
<mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>,  
Pancaratra Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada  
dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall  
<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi  
<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>,  
Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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### More from GKP:

The natural response to the first two myths of my 5 Myths Busted paper is the point that one should not make an exception into a rule.

Srila Prabhupada condoned Andrea Temple giving Harinam to others.

Is this an exception or a general rule? (Laksmi Tatachar says this in his video interview)

Do not women in ISKCON regularly give Harinam to everyone they preach to?

So do the opponents want to gag ISKCON women from preaching Harinam to everyone?

So is that an exception or general rule?

As for Saradia giving gayatri mantra to her husband on behalf of Srila Prabhupada, sure that is exceptional.

But are not all women in ISKCON initiated into the savitri gayatri?

Why did Srila Prabhupada decide to give it to all women in ISKCON?

Didn't Srila Prabhupada therefore make a general rule out of an exceptional thing?

If Srila Prabhupada accepted all his female disciples could be initiated into gayatri mantra just like the males who are we to change his general rule back to being an exceptional one.

So when we objectively look at Srila Prabhupadas words and actions we see that he was progressive and never gave a separate qualification for being a diksha guru in ISKCON to his male or female disciples. He never once said women could not be diksha gurus. He did say "not so many". And this will only be natural as there are also not so many sudra or mlecca born males who can become qualified.

What then are the opponents worried about? A few highly learned qualified granny Vaisnavis giving mantras to others?

In 1978 no one dared to point out that no sudra or mlecca born males have ever in recorded history been Vaisnava diksha gurus.

Everyone in ISKCON just assumed that sudra or mlecca born males could do that service.

Now the shoe is on the other foot. And instead of caste-by-birth discrimination against sudra or mlecca born gurus we are pondering gender-by-birth discrimination for Vaisnavi gurus, who unlike sudra or mlecca born gurus, have been accepted in Gaudiya Sampradaya for almost as long as it has existed, i.e. 500 or so years.

So sudra or mlecca born gurus accepted since 1978.

Vaisnavi gurus accepted in early 16th century.

It's a no brainer to work out which of the two alternatives above is progressive and which is orthodox in Gaudiya sampradaya.

GKD

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Fri, Feb 15, 2019 at 1:12 PM

[Suresvara Dasa](#)

<suresvara@gmail.com>

To: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>

Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma

Das <mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami  
<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Many thanks to Krishnarupa dd for calling out our complication of the VDG issue by consulting other sampradayas when we already have our own founder-acarya's clear indications on the subject. As Srila Bhaktivindoda Thakura put it:

"In the disciplic succession of Vaisnavas, the previous acaryas are established respectfully as siksa-gurus for the sampradaya. However, the adyacarya, the founder-acarya, or the original guru of a disciplic line, is appropriately worshiped and respected as the guru-siromani, the topmost crown jewel of the spiritual masters. His perfect philosophical conclusions are to be followed by all in the sampradaya; any contrary instructions will not be accepted." (Harinama-cintamani, Chapter 6, "Disregarding the Guru")

On VDG, or any subject, we examine all teachings through

Prabhupada's lens, and follow his example.

On Fri, Feb 15, 2019 at 6:04 AM Krishnarupa Dasi  
<[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)> wrote:

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Fri, Feb 15, 2019 at 9:28 PM

**[Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami](#)**

<[pdb108@yahoo.com](mailto:pdb108@yahoo.com)>

To: Krishnarupa Dasi <[krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com](mailto:krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com)>, Suresvara Dasa <[suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com)>

Cc: David Shapiro <[nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com)>, Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)>, Pancaratna Dasa

<[pancaratnadas@gmail.com](mailto:pancaratnadas@gmail.com)>, Visakha Dasi <[dasivisakha@gmail.com](mailto:dasivisakha@gmail.com)>, Rukmini Walker

<[askindredspirits@gmail.com](mailto:askindredspirits@gmail.com)>, Bob Cohen <[bobcohen@ivs.edu](mailto:bobcohen@ivs.edu)>, Krishna Kirti Das

<[krishnakirti@gmail.com](mailto:krishnakirti@gmail.com)>, Damodara Dasa <[damodara.bvks@gmail.com](mailto:damodara.bvks@gmail.com)>, Carl Woodham

<[carlwoodham@gmail.com](mailto:carlwoodham@gmail.com)>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <[brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com)>, Narahari

<[narahari@naraharidas.com](mailto:narahari@naraharidas.com)>, Ajita Cozzi

<[ajitacozzi@gmail.com](mailto:ajitacozzi@gmail.com)>, Atmanivedana Swami

<[Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net](mailto:Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net)>, BB Keshava Swami

<[bbks108@gmail.com](mailto:bbks108@gmail.com)>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <[janardanagkg@gmail.com](mailto:janardanagkg@gmail.com)>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <[BDDS.BTS@pamho.net](mailto:BDDS.BTS@pamho.net)>, Chris

Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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But that's why there is so much discussion. We all want to "follow Srila Prabhupada," but since (as was pointed out) his instructions point to more than one direction on this issue, then the whole hermeneutical question becomes relevant. Even Thomas Hopkins was quoted warning us about the danger that different sides will select (cherry-pick, half-a-hen) just those SP quotes that support their own stance on this (or any) issue. The fact of the matter is that, in addition to the four statements highlighted by Damodara prabhu, there is much in the Bhaktivedanta purports that emphasize the difference between the genders. And, no, our Founder-acharya is no misogynist! So we have to deal with and accommodate his cultural teachings as we deliberate on the big current question, a matter of application.

BPVDSw.

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Fri, Feb 15, 2019 at 10:57 PM

**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>

Cc: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>,

Suresvara Dasa <suresvara@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<brss108@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami  
<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his faithful followers.

Apologies for being inactive for a week or so. I was in midst of my travel to Mayapur, seminars, and of course researching more on Gaura Kesava Prabhu's replies as I do not want to miss any possible evidence that misses my eyes and thus make me establish untruth. For last 4 days I am thoroughly looking into sastras for the contexts and realities of all the points that Gaura Kesava Prabhu has kindly put forward (although in a jolty language). This includes my again reading full Parasara Smriti, which I already studied a few times about 3 years back in my pursuit to know varnasrama for kaliyuga.



Below is my first reply (in red) to his Facebook post on Say NO to Manu (in Kaliyuga) -- a Call-to-Action for all ISKCON devotees to follow.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

Feb 10, 2019 | 6hrs; FB page of Gaura Kesava Prabhu

Just say NO to Manu! (in Kali Yuga)

Although Srila Prabhupada quoted from Manu Samhita many times and even called it the Lawbook for Mankind. Still on other occasions he said that we could never follow it. Below we see that actually Manu Samhita is meant ONLY for Satya Yuga:

kr̥te tu mānavī dharmas

tretāyāṁ gautamaḥ smṛtaḥ

dvāpare śāṅkha likhitaḥ

kalau pārāśaraḥ smṛtaḥ

"The codes of Manu were authorized for the Satya yuga, the codes of Gautama for the Treta, the codes of Sankha and Likhita for the Dvarpara yuga and the codes of Parasara for this age of Kali." Parasara Smṛti 1.23

-----  
The SP quote that Gaura Kesava Prabhu is referring to in above post is—

My dear Madhusudana Prabhu,

Please accept my humble obeisances. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated May 4th, 1977.

I discussed the contents of your letter with His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada stated that our gṛhasthas should simply chant 50 rounds before conceiving a child. **Prabhupada said: "We do not want all these rituals. Chanting Hare Krishna is our only business. According to the Manu-samhita you are all mlecchas and yavanas. You cannot touch the Manu-samhita, what to speak of translating it. So if you try to follow the Manu-samhita then you become a mleccha and yavana and your career is finished."** I hope this makes the matter clear.

Hoping this meets you well.

Your servant, Tamal Krishna Gosvami, Secretary to Srila Prabhupada

[Ref. Letter to Madhusudana Vr̥ndavana, May 19, 1977] (emphasis ours)

This seems to be an offensive stance. It goes directly against Srila Prabhupada's stance on this topic. Gaura Kesava Prabhu brings just a single quote of Srila Prabhupada which he wrote for some disciple or a group of disciples (who prematurely wanted to translate Manu samhita). Gaura Kesava Prabhu tries to make a doctrine out of it. He undermines volumes of quotes of Srila Prabhupada where he uses Manu samhita as support, where he glorifies it as the law book for whole human society and says that current society should be based on it, and where he applies Manu samhita for his own disciples and ISKCON generations to come.

Thus, "Just say No to Manu" (in kali yuga) would be an inappropriate claim and needs to be cleared from the "speculative brains" of people influenced by this idea. It makes us remember Manusmṛti Dahan Din or the festival day of burning of Manu samhita (December 25, 1927 on which Dr. Ambedkar gathered crowd from India and officially burned Manu samhita).

His reasons were the same as those of Gaura Kesava Prabhu's in his arguments—birth based caste system. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and alongwith him the Indian constitution did the same mistake that Gaura Kesava Prabhu is proposing here—throwing the baby out with the bath water, that is throwing the whole scientific, quality based varnasrama system, out with the perverted jati based caste varnasrama system.

However, Gaura Kesava Prabhu doesn't seem to have studied Parasara smṛiti. It seems he just caught hold of single verse that declares it as Smṛiti for kaliyuga and has mistakenly thought that it must be debunking caste system and sexism. However, this idea is wrong—Parasara Smṛiti is as caste based and sexist as Manu Smṛiti itself. Here is a sample quote from it:

***duḥśīlo 'pi dvijaḥ pūjyo na tu śūdro jitendriyaḥ |***

***kaḥ parityajya gāṁ duṣṭāṁ duhec-chīlavatīm kharīm ||8.32||***

BRAHMANA IS WORSHIPPABLE EVEN IF NOT OF GOOD CHARACTER; SUDRA IS NOT WORSHIPPABLE EVEN IF SENSE-CONTROLLED. WHICH FOOL WILL GIVE UP AN AGGRESSIVE COW AND TRY MILKING A DOCILE, GOOD CHARACTERED SHE-ASS.

**Parasara Smriti 7.7-8 | ONE WHO DOESN'T GET HIS DAUGHTER MARRIED BY THE TIME SHE IS 12 YEARS OLD, HIS FOREFATHERS DRINK THE MONTHLY MENSTRUAL FLUID OF HIS DAUGHTER (7). THE FATHER, MOTHER, AND ELDER BROTHER GO TO HELL BY SEEING HER UNMARRIED MENSTRUATING (8).**

**To see more from Parasara Smriti (click on links to end of this email):**

[Caste System—Brahmana etc. by birth Women Discriminated](#)  
[Sati-rite—Encouraging women to die with husband](#)

[Mandates Child Marriage of women](#)

[Yuga-dharma mentioned is Charity and agnihotra is compulsory duty](#)

Srila Prabhupada almost always quoted Manu samhita when commenting on modern social and political issues (and especially so in case of women). He hardly quoted anything from Parasara smriti or even Hari-bhakti-vilasa regarding such issues. This shows significance of Manu-samhita even for kaliyuga.

A few sample quotes from Srila Prabhupada that counteract Gaura-kesava Prabhu's order of NO Manu-samhita (in kaliyuga). More quotes and their short explanations at the end of email ([Click here](#)).

That the Brahmacharini ashram is a good success is very good news. But the best thing will be if the grown-up Brahmacharinis get married. **ACCORDING TO VEDIC CULTURE, WOMAN IS NEVER TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT.** I shall be glad if the Brahmacharinis can have nice husbands, and live as Grhasthas. But if they cannot find out good husbands, it is better to remain a Brahmacharini all the life, even though it is little difficult. --- (Letter to Satsvarupa, Montreal, Aug 8, 1968)

In the above quote Srila Prabhupada applies instruction of Manu-samhita for his female disciples living in ashram.

**BECAUSE THE SEX-URGE IS SO STRONG IN YOUNG PERSONS, AND BECAUSE THEY ARE USED TO MIXING FREELY WITH ONE ANOTHER, I ENCOURAGE MY STUDENTS TO GET THEMSELVES MARRIED.** But our point is not that hard knot as above described. It is simply a relationship of mutually helping each other, man and wife, to make advancement in spiritual life, nothing more. We are not after home, money, fame, like that. But that does not mean that he shall not support her nicely, no. It is the duty of husband to protect wife in every way from the onslaught of material nature, and he must act always as her spiritual guide by being perfect example of devotee. Women are not so quick to learn, and they are weak by nature, so they should be protected in this way. **IN OUR VEDIC SCIENCE OF LIVING, IT IS ENJOINED THAT THE SOCIETY SHOULD BE ORGANIZED IN SUCH A WAY TO PROTECT WOMEN, CHILDREN, OLD PEOPLE AND COWS, BECAUSE FACTUALLY ALL OF THEM ARE INNOCENT.** So children have parents, elderly persons must have grown up children to protect them, and woman must have husband. **AND IT IS RECOMMENDED THEY SHOULD BE MARRIED AT VERY EARLY AGE, THEN THE WIFE WILL REMAIN ALWAYS CHASTE AND DEVOTED TO HER HUSBAND.** At such young age, from the first night onwards, she can never for a moment forget him, being still child and unspoiled, therefore she becomes the perfect chaste wife, and in those times the wife was so much devoted to her husband that **SHE WOULD VOLUNTARILY DIE IN THE FIRE OF HIS CREMATION, UNABLE TO LIVE WITHOUT HIM.** Myself, I was very young when I got married, and my wife was 11 years only. But there is no question of separation in our marriage belief, neither your daughter will ever be separated from that boy, that is their vow. Rather, it is when people are a little grown-up, when they have got little independence and their own ways of doing things, then if they marry there is often difficulty to adjust, just as it is more difficult to bend the bamboo when it is yellow. (Letter to Mr.Loy—Vrndavana 7 Nov 1972)

Woman brahmachāriṇī, this is artificial.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** In our centers, though, there are so many brahmachāriṇīs, and even sometimes they're encouraged to remain brahmachāriṇī.

**Prabhupāda:** That they cannot. As soon as they will find opportunity, they will become vyabhicāriṇī.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** They'll become what?

**PRABHUPĀDA:** VYABHICĀRIṆĪ. FOR WOMAN, PROTECTION.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** So you don't advocate this remaining sing..., these women remaining brahmachāriṇīs.

(Morning Conversation, Bombay, Apr 29, 1977)

In the below quote from SB 7.11.14, both Srila Prabhupada and Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura both have accepted and connected Manu samhita for varnasrama duties to Bhagavatam. They both quote the same verse. Thus, our acharyas have accepted Manu samhita, Srila Prabhupada accepts it, Srimad Bhagavatam (which is specifically for kaliyuga) accepts it, **WHO ARE WE TO SAY NO TO MANU?**

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains the position of brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas as follows. Brāhmaṇas have six occupational duties, of which three are compulsory—namely, studying the Vedas, worshiping the Deity and giving charity. By teaching, by inducing others to worship the Deity, and by accepting gifts, the brāhmaṇas receive the necessities of life. This is also confirmed in the Manu-samhitā:

*ṣaṅṅāṁ tu karmaṅāṁ asya trīṇi karmāṇi jīvikā*

*yajanādhyāpane caiva viśuddhāc ca pratigrahaḥ*

Of the six occupational duties of the brāhmaṇas, three are compulsory—namely, worship of the Deity, study of the Vedas and the giving of charity. In exchange, a brāhmaṇa should receive charity, and this should be his means of livelihood. A brāhmaṇa cannot

take up any professional occupational duty for his livelihood. The s̄āstras especially stress that if one claims to be a br̄ahmaṇa, he cannot engage in the service of anyone else; otherwise he at once falls from his position and becomes a śūdra. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī belonged to a very respectful family, but because they engaged in the service of Nawab Hussain Shah—not even as ordinary clerks, but as ministers—they were ostracized from brahminical society. Indeed, they became like Mohammedans and even changed their names. Unless a br̄ahmaṇa is very pure, he cannot accept charity from others. Charity should be given to those who are pure. Even if one is born in a family of br̄ahmaṇas, if one acts as a śūdra one cannot accept charity, for this is strictly prohibited. Although the kṣatriyas are almost as qualified as the br̄ahmaṇas, even they cannot accept charity. This is strictly prohibited in this verse by the word apratigraha. What to speak of the lower social orders, even the kṣatriyas must not accept charity. The king or government may levy taxes upon the citizens in various ways—by revenue duties, customs duties, realization of fines, and so on—provided the king is able to give full protection to his subjects to assure the security of their life and property. Unless he is able to give protection, he cannot levy taxes. However, a king must not levy any tax upon the br̄ahmaṇas and the Vaiṣṇavas fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

## Then, how to understand the statement that Parasara Smriti is for Kaliyuga?

Let us see the quote from Parasara smriti 1.24, again—

*kr̄te tu mānavī dharmas tretāyām gautamaḥ smṛtaḥ*

*dvāpare śāṅkha likhitau kalau pārāśaraḥ smṛtaḥ*

"The codes of Manu were authorized for the Satya yuga, the codes of Gautama for the Treta, the codes of Sankha and Likhita for the Dvarpara yuga and the codes of Parasara for this age of Kali."

It nowhere prohibits Manu-samhita to be used in Kaliyuga. It only says about the prominence of Parasara Smriti in Kaliyuga. This means that it mentions the rules that are to be followed differently from what is already mentioned in Manu-samhita. For instance, prayaschitta to be performed for some sin is recommended lesser compared to that mentioned in Manu-samhita. Thus, when we see for that particular sin, we need to follow the prayaschitta as mentioned in Parasara-smriti and not as mentioned in Manu-samhita.

However, the rules that are not mentioned in Parasara-smriti are to be followed as per Manu-samhita. For instance, there is no vyavahāra-kāṇḍa (section that deals with how to administer the state) in Parasara-smriti. Does that mean Parasara Smriti says that in Kaliyuga there should be no kings or no sastric guidance in how to rule?

No. Parasara-smriti itself mentions on several occasions that King should be there and that citizens should pay taxes, etc. But, Parasara-smriti does not give any detailed guidance on this matter. However, Manu-samhita has whole section called vyavahāra-kāṇḍa (or rāja-sāstra) with many chapters. Hence, Manu-samhita has to be followed in this case. And there are many such cases.

Thus, Parasara smriti is param means when there is a clash between statements of Manu and Parasara smritis, words of Parasara smriti are to be followed for Kaliyuga. That is it. It doesn't reject Manu Samhita. That is why we find Srila Prabhupada mainly quoting Manu-samhita for social and political issues.

## Srila Prabhupada on Manu samhita

(1) As for behavior, there are many rules and regulations guiding human behavior, such as the Manu-samhitā, which is the law of the human race. Even up to today, those who are Hindu follow the Manu-samhitā. **Laws of inheritance and other legalities are derived from this book.** [Ref. BG 16.7, purport]

Response: It's clear that laws regarding inheritance etc. should be taken from Manu-samhita, otherwise there is no point in mentioning it in the issue.

(2) In modern days the people in general occupy the administration by the strength of manipulated votes, but they are never trained in the primary duties of the king, and that is also not possible for everyone. Under the circumstances the untrained administrators play havoc to make the subjects happy in all respects. On the other hand, these untrained administrators gradually become rogues and thieves and increase the taxation to finance a top-heavy administration that is useless for all purposes. **Actually the qualified br̄ahmaṇas are meant to give direction to the kings for proper administration in terms of the scriptures like the Manu-samhitā and Dharma-s̄āstras of Parāśara.**[Ref. SB 1.9.27, purport]

Response: Point to be noted that Manu-samhita is not excluded from Srila Prabhupada's list.

(3) The Manu-samhitā is the standard lawbook for humanity, and **every human being** is advised to follow this great book of social knowledge.[Ref. SB 2.1.36, purport]

Response: Does that mean Vaisnavas are not human beings?

(4) Manu-samhitā recommends that to keep a wife satisfied a husband should give her some ornaments because women are generally fond of home, ornaments, dresses, children, etc. In this way the woman is the center of all material enjoyment.[Ref. SB 4.25.21, purport]

Response: **(If Manu-samhita is meant for Satya-yuga)** Should Manu be consulted in order to keep one's wife satisfied? If it is irrelevant to quote Manu in kali-yuga, then why Srila Prabhupada has included it in his purports to give us guidance in this particular issue!

(5) A man is allowed to keep more than one wife because he cannot enjoy sex when the wife is pregnant. If he wants to enjoy sex at such a time, he may go to another wife who is not pregnant. **These are laws mentioned in the Manu-samhitā** and other scriptures.[Ref. SB 6.1.8, purport]

Response: Again, it is in the purport, meant to be studied for the next 10,000 years in this Kali-yuga!

(6) As stated in the Manu-samhitā (2.215) and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.19.17) :

*mātrā svarā duhitrā vā nāviviktāsano bhavet*

*balavān indriya-grāmo vidvāmsam api karṣati*

"A man should not associate with a woman in a solitary place, not even with his mother, sister or daughter, for the senses are so strong that they lead astray even a person advanced in knowledge." [Ref. SB 6.18.30, purport]

Response: Srila Prabhupada takes special interest to quote Manu-samhita along with Srimad-bhagavatam to make emphasis. This indicates that Manu-samhita does have an important role to play (in kali-yuga) in certain matters if not all!

(7) In many places in Bhagavad-gītā, the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, refers to the varṇāśrama-dharma of four varṇas and four āśramas. He teaches people about this varṇāśrama-dharma so that all of human society can live peacefully by observing the principles for the four social divisions and four spiritual divisions (varṇa and āśrama) and thus make advancement in spiritual knowledge. The Manus compiled the Manu-samhitā. The word samhitā means Vedic knowledge, and manu indicates that this knowledge is given by Manu.....

**Manu gave the law known as Manu-samhitā, which is full of directions based on varṇa and āśrama concerning how to live as a human being.** These are very scientific ways of life, but under the rule of demons like Hiranyakaśipu, human society breaks all these systems of law and order and gradually becomes lower and lower. Thus there is no peace in the world. **The conclusion is that if we want real peace and order in the human society, we must follow the principles laid down by the Manu-samhitā and confirmed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.** [Ref. SB 7.8.48, purport]

Response: Srila Prabhupada is saying "must", it is not optional!

(8) As we learn from the history of the Mahābhārata, or "Greater India," the wives and daughters of the ruling class, the kṣatriyas, knew the political game, but we never find that a woman was given the post of chief executive. This is in accordance with the injunctions of Manu-samhitā, **but unfortunately Manu-samhitā is now being insulted**, and the Āryans, the members of Vedic society, cannot do anything. Such is the nature of Kali-yuga. [Ref. SB 10.4.5, purport]

Response: Should we consult or insult Manu-samhita based on this instruction of Srila Prabhupada?

(9) The human race has come from the Manu. Therefore the Vedic followers, they follow the principles, or codes, of Manu-samhitā. Manu-samhitā is the law, Hindu law, still accepted, although they have made many amendments. But it is not to be amended. **Just like in the Manu-samhitā there is no divorce.** Now our Hindu laws, they have amended, "Divorce is allowed." That is not according to Manu-samhitā. [Ref. Lecture BG 7.3, feb 18 1974, Bombay]

Response: Should we allow "divorce" among devotees if this instruction is not available in Parasara-smṛti?

(10) Now Cāṇakya Paṇḍita says, "In the family there are enemies." How? Ṛṇa-kartā pitā śatruḥ. Cāṇakya Paṇḍita said, "A father who is a great debtor, he is enemy." Because the son inherits the money of the father, similarly, **the law is that if the father dies a debtor, the son becomes responsible to pay the debts. That is the law, Manu-samhitā.** I do not know what is the law here. I don't think the son is responsible for paying the debts of father, but in India that is the law. One big barrister, Mr. C. R. Das, his father died insolvent, making debts. So when he became very rich, he called all the creditors and paid five to five, that "My father was debtor. You take this money." That is obligation. [Ref. Lec. SB 1.3.17, sep 22, 1972, Los angeles]

Response: Do we disagree with Srila Prabhupada if the law is not found in Parasara-smṛti?

(11) Śyāmasundara: He says that the social good is that which is desired by the most people.

Prabhupāda: Self... Most people may be foolish. Therefore we don't take social or in that way. Our Vedic civilization is from the higher authorities. Just like law we take from Manu, Manu-samhitā. [Ref. Discussions with Syamasundara Dasa]

Response: Srila Prabhupada takes laws from Manu. How do you reconcile this statement with the letter to Madhusadana wherein Srila Prabhupada discourages him from even touching Manu-samhita?

(12) Yogeśvara: He says this seems to be somewhat different from the traditional Hindu practice, since in the Manu-samhitā, for example, śūdras are not to be instructed.

Prabhupāda: **Yes, but we do not keep him śūdra. A devotee is no longer śūdra. We are creating brāhmaṇas. Just like these Europeans and Americans. They, according to Manu-samhitā, they are mleccchas, yavanas.** But we are not keeping them mleccchas and yavanas. Just like these European and American boys. They are accepting the Vedic regulatives principles: no illicit sex, no meat-eating, no intoxication, no gambling. So they are no more śūdras or caṇḍālas. **They are brāhmaṇas.** [Ref. Room conversation, June 5, 1974, Geneva]

Response: Please follow this. Srila Prabhupada does agree to the effect that sudras are not meant to be instructed as per Manu-samhita, however he justifies devotees' position in this regard. **(They are brāhmaṇas)** How is this matching with the letter to Madhusadana wherein Srila Prabhupada calls his disciples' attempt to follow Manu-samhita will turn them again into mleccchas?

And, if devotees are not supposed to follow Manu-samhita in kali-yuga (to be saved from turning again into mleccchas), then why does Srila Prabhupada, the founder-acarya of ISKCON take so much consideration in quoting Manu-samhita on several issues?

(13) Harikeśa: **In the Manu-samhitā also there is many, many rules about what kind of meat to eat.**

Prabhupāda: That is gradually. Gradually. If he cannot give up meat-eating, so, "All right, don't eat cows' flesh. You eat hogs. That's all." But the real purpose is to stop meat-eating. And that is also under restriction. "You can eat one goat. Sacrifice it before Goddess Kālī under such and such rules and regulation. Then you take one piece of meat at night." So any sensible man—"Why I should undergo such rules and

regulation for eating a little piece of meat? Better give it up." That is the idea. It is not that encouraging him.[Ref, Morning walk, Jan 22-23, 1976, Mayapura]

Response: This is another example how Srila Prabhupada receives Manu-samhita.

Thus, far "No way has Srila Prabhupada seemed to go against the authority of Manu-samhita wherever it comes into picture."

If in Kali-yuga only Parasara-smṛti is to be consulted (and never Manu-smṛti, strictly!) according to Parasara Smṛti 1.23, then Srila Prabhupada's mentioning of Manu-samhita and accepting its authority on several social issues, then, does not appear to be more than a joke!

## Caste system -- Brahmana etc. by birth

duḥśīlo 'pi dvijaḥ pūjyo na tu śūdro jitendriyaḥ |

kaḥ parityajya gāṁ duṣṭāṁ duhec-chīlavatīm kharīm ||8.32||

**BRAHMANA IS WORSHIPPABLE EVEN IF NOT OF GOOD CHARACTER; SUDRA IS NOT WORSHIPPABLE EVEN IF SENSE-CONTROLLED. WHICH FOOL WILL GIVE UP AN AGGRESSIVE COW AND TRY MILKING A DOCILE, GOOD CHARACTERED SHE-ASS.**

śūdra-kanyā-samutpanno brāhmaṇena tu saṁskṛtaḥ |

asaṁskārād bhaved-dāsaḥ saṁskārād-eva nāpatiḥ ||11.23||

kṣatriyāc-chūdrakanyāyām samutpannastu yaḥ sutaḥ |

sa gopāla iti khyāto bhojyo viprair-na saṁśayaḥ ||11.24||

vaiśya-kanyā-samudbhūto brāhmaṇena tu saṁskṛtaḥ |

sa hyārdhika iti jñeyo bhojyo viprair-na saṁśayaḥ ||11.25||

**A CHILD BORN OF A ŚŪDRA'S DAUGHTER BY A BRAHMANA IS CALLED NĀPATI IF SAṂSKĀRA IS DONE.**

**A CHILD BORN OF A ŚŪDRA'S DAUGHTER BY A BRAHMANA IS CALLED DĀSA IF SAṂSKĀRA IS NOT DONE.**

**A CHILD BORN OF A ŚŪDRA'S DAUGHTER BY A KṢATRIYA IS CALLED GOPĀLA, AND A BRAHMANA CAN EAT WHAT HE COOKS.**

**A CHILD BORN OF A VAIŚYA'S DAUGHTER BY A BRAHMANA (WITH SAṂSKĀRA) IS CALLED ĀRDDHIKA, AND A BRAHMANA CAN EAT WHAT HE COOKS.**

**Comment:** In the above you can see that son's duty and varna etc. are set by the combination of father and mother's varna. This is purely a case of caste system so much vilified by Gaura Kesava Prabhu.

-----  
kapilākṣīrapānena brāhmaṇīgamanena ca |

**VEDĀKṢĀRAVICĀTEṆA ŚŪDRASYA NARAKAṀ DHRUVAM ||1.75||**

Drinking milk of a kapilā cow, having sexual intercourse with a wife of a brahmana, and **BY CONTEMPLATING ON THE WORDS OF THE VEDA A ŚŪDRA FALLS DOWN TO HELL.**

## Women are discriminated similar to Manu

jito dharmo hyadharmeṇa satyaṁ caivānṛtena ca |

jitāścauraiśca rājānaḥ **STRĪBHIŚCA PURUṢĀ JITĀḤ** ||1.30||

sīdanti cāgnihotrāṇi gurupūjā prañasyati |

kumāryaśca prasūyante tasmin-kaliyuge sadā ||1.31||

In kaliyuga, adharma has won over dharma, asatya has won over satya, kings have been won by thieves, **MEN HAVE BEEN OVERPOWERED BY WOMEN.** Agnihotras and respect for gurus have almost been lost. **UNMARRIED WOMEN ARE GIVING BRITH TO BABIES.**

**[POINT TO BE NOTED: PARASARA SAMHITA IS FULLY AWARE OF THE WOMEN CONTROLLING MEN SITUATION OF KALIYUGA; KEEPING THAT IN MIND HE INSTRUCTS AS BELOW]**

daridraṃ vyādhitaṃ dhūrtaṃ bhartāraṃ yāvamanyate |

sā śunī jāyate mṛtvā sūkarī ca punaḥ punaḥ ||4.16||

patyau jīvati yā nārī upoṣya vratam-ācaret |

āyuṣyaṃ harate bhartuḥ sā nārī narakaṃ vrajet ||4.17||

apṛṣṭvā caiva bhartāraṃ yā nārī kurute vratam |

sarvaṃ tad-rākṣasān-gacched-ityevaṃ manurabravīt ||4.18||

A woman who disregards her husband who is poor, sick, or crooked, becomes a bitch or a sow in her next life (16). A woman who performs vrata (fasting etc. vow) while her husband is alive, reduces her husband's life and she goes to hell (17). Manu says that whatever vrata etc. a woman performs without getting permission of her husband, goes to the rākṣasas (18).

**Comment:** Although Parasara samhita accepts in the beginning (1.31) that women controls men in kaliyuga, still, being well aware of this fact, here (in 4.16) he says that women who disregard their husband goes to hell and become a bitch or a sow in her next life.

na striyāṃ keśa-vapanaṃ na dūre śayanāśanam ||9.56||

na ca goṣṭhe vased-rātrau na divā gā anuvrajet |

nadiṣu saṅgame caiva aranyeṣu viśeṣataḥ ||9.57||

na strīṅām-ajīnaṃ vāso vratam-evaṃ samācaret |

trisaṅdhyāṃ snānam-ityuktaṃ surāṅām-arcanaṃ tathā ||9.58||

bandhumadhye vrataṃ tāsāṃ kṛcchra-cāndrāyaṅādikam |

grheṣu satataṃ tiṣṭhec-chucir-niyamam-ācaret ||9.59||

WOMEN ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SHAVE THEIR HEAD, SLEEP BEING AWAY FROM HOUSE (IN NIGHT), OR EAT BEING AWAY FROM HOUSE. THEY SHOULD NOT SLEEP IN GOSHALAL IN THE NIGHT AND NOT GO BEHIND THE COWS IN DAYTIME. THEY SHOULD NOT GO TO PLACE WHERE DIFFERENT RIVERS MEET AND TO FOREST. FOR WOMEN THERE IS NO BRAHMACARI LIFE, NOR LIVING IN GURU'S ASRAMA, NOR FOLLOWING THE VOWS OF BRAHMACHARIS, NOT FOLLOWING THREE SANDHYA-VANDANAMS, NOR WORSHIPPING THE DEITIES. THEIR VOWS LIKE KṚCCHRA-CĀDRĀYAṅA ARE TO BE ALWAYS PERFORMED STAYING IN HOUSE AMONG RELATIVES FOLLOWING ALL RULES OF CLEANLINESS.

jāreṇa janayed-garbhaṃ mṛte tyakte gate patau |

tām tyajed-apare rāṣṭre patitām pāpakāriṇīm ||10.31||

**A WOMAN, WHO HAS BEEN REJECTED BY HER HUSBAND OR WHOSE HUSBAND HAS DIED, SHOULD BE ABANDONED TO ANOTHER STATE IF SHE BECOMES PREGNANT BY ANOTHER MAN AND THUS BECOMES SINFUL.**

### *Encouraging women to die with husband (the SATI RITE)*

mṛte bhartari yā nārī brahmacarya-vrate sthitā |

sā mṛtā labhate svargaṃ yathā te brahmacāriṅaḥ ||4.31||

tisraḥ koṭyo 'rdhakoṭī ca yāni lomāni mānave |

tāvat-kālaṃ vaset-svarge bhartāra yānugacchati ||4.32||

vyālagrāhī yathā vyālaṃ balād-uddharate bilāt |

evaṃ strī patim-uddhṛtya tenaiva saha modate ||4.33||

A woman who lives a strict life of celibcy after the death of her husband, goes to heaven after death, as those male naiṣṭhika-brahmacārīs (31).

**HOWEVER, A WOMAN WHO FOLLOWS HER HUSBAND BY BURNING HERSELF INTO HIS FUNERAL PIRE, RESIDES IN HEAVEN TILL 3.5 CRORE YEARS, EQUAL TO NUMBER OF HAIRS ON THE BODY OF HUMAN BEINGS (32). SUCH A WOMAN LIFTS HER HUSBAND FROM ABOMINABLE POSITIONS JUST AS A SNAKE CATCHER CATCHES A SNAKE FROM SNAKE HOLE. SHE THEN ENJOYS WITH HIM IN HEAVAN FOR THESE MANY YEARS (33).**



## Early Marriages

aṣṭa-varṣā bhaved-gaurī nava-varṣā tu rohiṇī |

daśa-varṣā bhavet-kanyā ata ūrdhvaṁ rajasvalā ||7.6||

prāpte tu dvādaśe varṣe yaḥ kanyāṁ na prayacchati |

māsi māsi rajas-tasyaḥ pibanti pitaro 'niśam ||7.7||

mātā caiva pitā caiva jyeṣṭho bhrātā tathaiva ca |

traste narakaṁ yānti dṛṣṭvā kanyāṁ rajasvalām ||7.8||

An 8 year old girl is called gaurī; called rohiṇī when reaches 9; called kanyā when reaches 10; beyond that she is rajasvalā or menstruating (6).

**ONE WHO DOESN'T GET HIS DAUGHTER MARRIED BY THE TIME SHE IS 12 YEARS OLD, HIS FOREFATHERS DRINK THE MONTHLY MENSTRUAL FLUID OF HIS DAUGHTER (7). THE FATHER, MOTHER, AND ELDER BROTHER GO TO HELL BY SEEING HER UNMARRIED MENSTRUATING (8).**

## Some differences of Yuga-dharma from ours

tapah param kṛta-yuge tretāyām jñānam-ucyate |

dvāpare yajñam-evāhur-**DĀNAM-EVA KALAU-YUGE** || 1.23 ||

kṛte tu mānavā dharmās-tretāyām gautamāḥ smṛtāḥ |

dvāpare śaṅkha-likhitāḥ kalau pārāśarāḥ smṛtāḥ ||1.24||

In satya-yuga austerity was considered topmost process, cultivating knowledge in tretā-yuga; in dvāpara-yuga sacrifices were considered topmost, and **CHARITY IS THE TOPMOST PROCESS FOR KALI-YUGA.**

na kāryamāvasathyena **NĀGNIHOTREṆA VĀ PUNAḤ** |

sa bhavet-karma-cāṇḍālo yastu dharmā-parāṅmukhaḥ ||4.21||

A gr̥hastha **WHO DOESN'T PERFORM AGNIHOTRA** and is away from dharma, eventhough he may be performing all karmas, **HE IS A CĀṆḌĀLA.**

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Fri, Feb 15, 2019 at 11:49 PM

[Jahnvi Devi](#)

<janavidevi@hotmail.com>

To: Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Suresvara Dasa

<suresvara@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das  
<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<brss108@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami  
<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Hare Krishna Damodar prabhu.

Please accept my humble obeisances and all glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Please forgive my ignorance.

After reading your last email I was wondering and I would like to know according to your researches and knowledge, would a married (protected) lady be eligible to be a diksa guru? (if she is well versed in Krishna consciousness and all the other requirements to be a diksa guru in iskcon).

Ys Sri jahnvi dd

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 4:39 AM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: krishnakirti@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com

Cc: nrsimhananda@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, suresvara@gmail.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com, sati.bts@gmail.com

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GKP and many others are not convinced by KKP's arguments and neither is KKP and many others convinced by GKP's arguments. Each of them believe their statements are logical, sastric and straightforward and it's difficult for them to understand why the other party cannot accept their arguments.

From the very beginning of this discussion, I never felt the VDG was the real issue. The most fundamental challenge we face in our attempt to resolve this issue not about siddhanta but about how we proceed when we see such a strong divide between us. Is there a place for both sides to exist in Iskcon? I believe there must be.

We are individuals with individual experiences, natures and preaching situations, so one size won't always fit all, and as a mature movement we will need to learn how accommodate varying views under one roof. If we fail to do this, I believe this could prove to be the most fatal mistake Iskcon could possible make.

I think we all see the validity of both GKP's and KKP's arguments when seen from the context they are representing, Can we not agree that for a healthy Iskcon we need devotees who represent both views? Is it not better to discuss how both groups can coexist in a respectful way than to utilize our efforts and time in attempting to prove one another wrong? "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." All we have been doing recently is rehashing arguments made weeks earlier on this forum. For example, I think the argument that Suniti as a woman can't initiate and the rebuttal that "No women could initiate in Satya yuga, so this statement is not relevant today," has been made at least 15 times in this discussion, with both sides not budging one inch from their stance.

We are all individuals and we will thus view our philosophy in individual ways. Can we not be respectful enough of one another

to realize that Krishna consciousness is big enough for all of us, that we are all sincere, that we all are deeply contemplative and versed in sastra, yet we will not always agree? Yet this does not have to divide us or our movement.

The real problem will be that we allow disagreements of such a serious nature to divide us.

Perhaps India or varnasrama communities are not ready for or do not want female gurus, and if so Indian temples will not welcome those gurus to operate in their communities (some communities have asked extremely liberal or conservative gurus to not visit their temples), while at the same time the GBC can acknowledge that females can take disciples. Perhaps those sisyas will predominately live in countries outside of India. Or perhaps we'll be surprised that in India many will want a vaisnavi guru and in the US it won't be as popular as imagined. Whatever the case, if we don't make room for both the conservative and liberal to find soil to grow in Iskcon, we will be laying a weak foundation for Iskcon, and it will crack sooner or later.

The greatest disservice we can offer the next generation is a movement that was not able to maturely resolve its differences. Can we not be mature enough to allow varying ideas to exist in an Iskcon that is more generous and accommodating than it has been to date?

Why just Krishna West? Why not a Krishna East for conservatives? Why not a Krishna Mid-West or Middle-East for more moderate liberals and conservatives? Indeed, this is already happening naturally, so why not recognize it and organize it. Otherwise, we will fight over East and West, and whatever little we accomplish will be at the cost of our unity.

SABHA members, I believe one of our most important services to the GBC is to help the GBC and our movement mature to the point that we can follow Prabhupada's advice for "unity in diversity." And as he said, this is what should be discussed in Mayapur every year. Therefore, I think this should be one of our most fundamental discussions and missions.

Your servant,  
Mahatma das

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 5:25 AM



**[Narahari](#)**

<narahari@naraharidas.com>

To: Mahatma <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: krishnakirti@gmail.com, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, damodara.bvks@gmail.com,

Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Carl

Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Uttama Sloka

<brss108@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata

Damodara Swami <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Suresvara Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>,

Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>,

BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha

Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS

(Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)"

<BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"  
<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das  
<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, "... " <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi  
devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sriradha Govinda Dasi  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>,  
sati.bts@gmail.com

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Mahatma Prabhu.

I applaud your broad minded words. Thank you for such a breath of fresh air. I could not possibly agree with you more.

Your servant,  
Narahari dasa

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 6:50 AM



**Michael Cremo**

<mcremo@cs.com>

To: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi  
<dasivisakha@gmail.com>

Cc: Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami  
<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net>,  
"Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.ACBSP@pamho.net>, ??  
? <siddha\_007@163.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Brahmaturtha Das <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa  
<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah  
<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya  
<divyajps@yahoo.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Kalakantha  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Kratu Das  
<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi  
<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa  
<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Mahatma das <mahat@aol.com>,  
Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Nrsimhananda das David  
Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa  
<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."  
<pdb108@yahoo.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>,  
Rukmini Devi Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi  
dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini  
<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Suresvara <suresvara@gmail.com>,  
Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Was the GBC committee that drafted the proposal to allow Vaisnavis in ISKCON to give first initiations aware of the Narada Pancaratra quotes? Or did this come up only after the committee did its draft proposal? Anyone know?

Ys. Drutakarma Dasa

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 7:38 AM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Michael Cremo <mcremo@cs.com>

Cc: ??? <siddha\_007@163.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti

Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>,  
Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Brahmatirtha



Das <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net>, Kalakantha <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.ACBSP@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Rukmini Devi Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Suresvara <suresvara@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>

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The GBC committee chaired by Sivarama Swami did their work confidentially. Their report was suppose to secret. So no one other than committee members have access to their research at this time from my understanding.

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 8:05 AM



**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, bbks108@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu, brss108@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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Mahatma Pr- Can you come up with a proposal?

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 8:16 AM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: nrsimhananda@gmail.com, mcremo@cs.com

Cc: siddha\_007@163.com, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net, bbks108@gmail.com, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, janardanagkg@gmail.com, brss108@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, Drutakarma.AC BSP@pamho.net, carlwoodham@gmail.com, Kratudasa108@yahoo.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, Mahaman.AC BSP@pamho.net, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com

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as an interesting consideration, we are not talking about the narada pancaratna as a whole, but really about one verse given by bharadwaj muni, a rishi and yogi, but not a bhakta. i know this belongs to a hermeneutical discussion, but I find it an interesting to ponder the question of whether all evidence has equal weight, or do the bhaktivedanta purports carry significantly more weight than a statement by Bharadwaj muni (and btw, using Bharadwaj Muni's statement combined the Suniti purport as proof that when Prabhupada said very few women will be guru he meant they would be on the bhava stage has not been accepted by most of us on this conference, i.e. we don't agree with the logic used by Krishna Kirti and Damodar in employing these verses to come to

their conclusions. I, and many others offered that the Suniti verse relates to women in Satyayuga, not to women after the time of Mahaprabhu, and especially not to women after the time of Prabhupada. I have not seen evidence that women at this time were initiated and/or gave diksa. Therefore, what we are really left with is Bharadwaj Muni's statements against the many statements of Prabhupada encouraging all of us to preach and make disciples. Let us not forget that,

"In the disciplic succession of Vaisnavas, the previous acaryas are established respectfully as siksa-gurus for the sampradaya. However, the adyacarya, the founder-acarya, or the original guru of a disciplic line, is appropriately worshiped and respected as the guru-siromani, the topmost crown jewel of the spiritual masters. His perfect philosophical conclusions are to be followed by all in the sampradaya; any contrary instructions will not be accepted." (Harinama-cintamani, Chapter 6, "Disregarding the Guru")

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 9:58 AM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: nrsimhananda@gmail.com

Cc: Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net,

BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, bbks108@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu, brss108@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, sriradhita@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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I would need help with this and I think it is broader than what I presented in this letter. Sagar Maharaj also mentioned the importance of dealing with this topic so I am sure he will want to help. If any others are interested in helping, or have ideas on how to make iskcon more encompassing, perhaps recognizing various orders within and on the periphery of the movement, let me know. If we don't try to for this, I think we are failing the next generation.

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 10:12 AM



**[Suresvara Dasa](#)**

<suresvara@gmail.com>  
To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>  
Cc: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, kratudas108 <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Ajita <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar Swami <brss108@gmail.com>, carlwoodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, BP Damodara Maharaja <pdb108@yahoo.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Sri Oppecinii <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Since finding unity amidst our often dizzying diversity is the key to unlocking the cooperation we'll need to please Srila Prabhupada and take KC to every town and village, if I can help you, Mahatma Prabhu, I'm at your service.

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 10:22 AM



**[Mahatma Das](#)**

<mahat@aol.com>

To: suresvara@gmail.com

Cc: nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com,

Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, ajitacozzi@gmail.com,

askindredspirits@gmail.com, bbks108@gmail.com,

bobcohen@ivs.edu, brss108@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com, chandraswami108@hotmail.com,

damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com,

dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com,

krishnakirti@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,

mahatmada@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com,

narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com,

pdb108@yahoo.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com,

sati.bts@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com,

sriradhita@gmail.com, vrnda16@icloud.com

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thank you.

i think we will need to show what has happened and what will happen if we don't know how to respectfully serve with our brothers and sisters that we don't agree with. I am sure there are historical precedents we can refer to that might help us predict likely scenarios that will face Iskcon if we are unable to embrace unity in diversity well. Perhaps some of you are already aware of details of religious history that we could learn from, i.e. that resembles what we are going through.

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 10:47 AM



**[Suresvara Dasa](#)**

<suresvara@gmail.com>

To: Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>

Cc: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, David

Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen



<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das  
<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Damodara Dasa  
<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham  
<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar  
<brss108@gmail.com>, Narahari  
<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Ajita Cozzi  
<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami  
<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami  
<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami  
<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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**Damodara Maharaja,**

In my experience, Srila Prabhupada's vani is so complete that it even provides the hermeneutic tools to resolve its own paradoxes, including VDG and gender roles. But let's save that discusssion for face-to-face in Mayapur. Just a few more days now.

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**Damodara Dasa**

Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 3:26 PM



<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Michael Cremo <mcremo@cs.com>

Cc: Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.Swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.ACBSP@pamho.net>,

"Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.ACBSP@pamho.net>, ??

? <siddha\_007@163.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti

Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Brahmaturtha Das

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, janavi devi

<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, Kalakantha

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, Mahatma das <mahat@aol.com>,

Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Nrsimhananda das David

Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b."

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>,

Rukmini Devi Dasi <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi

dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini

<sriradhita@gmail.com>, Suresvara <suresvara@gmail.com>,

Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

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Respected Drutakarma Prabhu.

Please accept my humble obeisances,

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayaatah.

GBC subcommittee contained Badari Narayana Maharaja and

Sivarama Maharaja. Both of them had already thoroughly read and understood our paper on Narada Pancaratra. The subcommittee did have access to our first paper on Narada Pancaratra which demonstrated quotes that prohibit women to be diksa-guru unless they are siddha.

Also, the paper from the subcommittee states:

The discussions aimed at examining and respecting:

- Srila Prabhupada's direct statements on the topic.
- Srila Prabhupada's actions and mood.
- Our Gaudiya history.
- **Pancaratriki** and *bhagavata* considerations.
- The Vedic tradition.
- The need to consider the effect of this decision on the development of a *daivi varnasrama* culture within ISKCON.
- Our own *adhikara*.

Thus, we can conclude that the sub-committee was aware of Narada Pancaratra quotes.

However, it is after the paper from the sub-committee that we wrote another paper from Narada-pancaratra which strikingly details the diksa procedure that ISKCON is following today. This was, presumably, the first, so close account of sastric evidence that supports our diksa-process.

This evidence was not with the subcommittee while framing their proposal. However we did send this paper later, about a month and a half back to all the members, and requested if they could wair some more before taking the decision in regard of the new evidence that has arisen.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

On Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 7:12 AM Michael Cremo  
<[mcremo@cs.com](mailto:mcremo@cs.com)> wrote:

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 3:40 PM



**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: Jahnavi Devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>

Cc: Bhakti Prabhupada-vrata Damodara Swami

<pdb108@yahoo.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi

<krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Suresvara Dasa

<suresvara@gmail.com>, David Shapiro

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Pancaratna Dasa

<pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi

<dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar

<brss108@gmail.com>, Narahari

<narahari@naraharidas.com>, Ajita Cozzi

<ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami

<janardanagkg@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Chris

Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa

Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>, Sri

Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd

<vrnda16@icloud.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>

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Respected Jahnavi Mataji,

**Please accept my humble obeisances,**

Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

After reading your last email I was wondering and I would like to know according to your researches and knowledge, would a married (protected) lady be eligible to be a diksa guru? (if she is well versed in Krishna consciousness and all the other requirements to be a diksa guru in iskcon).

Where did I mentioned that women could not be diksa-guru just because they need to be protected?

Married, qualified, great devotee women also did not become diksa-guru because it is not a sva-dharma or prescribed duty for a woman to become diksa-guru. No sastras prescribe women to become diksa-guru. Some indirect allowance is found in Bharadvaja-samhita for siddha women. That is it. Kunti, Devahuti, Rukmini, Yashoda, etc. were nitya-siddha—no one can say that they were not eligible. Still, none of them even thought to become diksa-gurus. Why?

Thankyou,  
Your servant,  
damodara das

ps. I know that there are no new points coming up, and both parties are just repeating their points. Thus, it seems there cannot be much fruit yielded by discussion. Anyway, it is my duty to supply sastric evidences based on guru-sadhu-sastra.

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 3:59 PM

**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

Please find my response below in red:

Your servant,  
damodara das

**More from GKP:**

The natural response to the first two myths of my 5 Myths Busted paper is the point that one should not

make an exception into a rule.

That is wrong. If asking anyone to chant Hare Krishna is called giving Harinama diksa then you are absolutely correct. That even small child 5 years old can do. Sarasvati was doing this in her childhood. But is the proposal of GBC sub-committee stating this? Is Harinama-diksa given in ISKCON the same as what you state? No.

In ISKCON Harinama-diksa is giving of spiritual name to disciple and taking initiation vows from him. Guru also takes up sinful reactions of disciple on first initiation (harinama-diksa).

It seems that Gaura Kesava Prabhu is unaware of first initiation process in ISKCON otherwise, I wonder why would he put this point at the first place?

Also, we have thoroughly demonstrated in our second paper that the first initiation process of ISKCON is strictly based on Narada-pancaratra's panca-samskaras. We invite anyone to bring a more strongly matching evidence of ISKCON's diksa-process from sastras. In absence of this, the evidence from the pancaratras we have supplied stands most authoritative. Srila Prabhupada himself has said—

So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, the initiation ceremony, the marriage ceremony, the sacred thread ceremony, whatever we observe, they are strictly according to the śāstra. That is our point. (Wedding lecture, New Delhi, Nov 17, 1971)

### **Regarding Saradiya giving brahma-gayatri to his husband:**

In the very early days of ISKCON, Śrīla Prabhupāda was always present, performed the initiation ceremony, and gave



the mantras himself. As the movement began to spread, Śrīla Prabhupāda faced the practical problem of how to perform initiations from a distance when he was not present. This letter to Vaikuṅṭhanātha and Śārādīyā is such a case. Śrīla Prabhupāda solves the problem by giving his “power of attorney” to Śārādīyā, and he instructs her what to do on his behalf. Śārādīyā’s husband remained the disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda only, and thus she was not made dīkṣā-guru.

It is important to note that this was not the final solution for this problem. Future long-distance initiations were conducted only by men, who performed the homa, and the mantra was given via a recording on a \$1.00 cassette tape. But while Śrīla Prabhupāda was manifest in this world, this recording was imbued with his spiritual “power of attorney,” and anyone who was accepted by Śrīla Prabhupāda and heard that recording was duly initiated. This recording still exists, but after Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disappearance it no longer has the potency to initiate anyone. Only Ṛtviks believe otherwise.

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 4:06 PM

**[Bhakti Rasayana Sagar](#)**

<brss108@gmail.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: nrsimhananda@gmail.com,

Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,

Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com,

Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, ajitacozzi@gmail.com,

askindredspirits@gmail.com, bbks108@gmail.com,

bobcohen@ivs.edu, brss108@gmail.com,

carlwoodham@gmail.com, chandraswami108@hotmail.com,

damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com,

dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com,

janardanagkg@gmail.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com,  
krishnakirti@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com,  
mahatmadasa@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com,  
narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com,  
pdb108@yahoo.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com,  
sati.bts@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com,  
sriradhita@gmail.com, suresvara@gmail.com,  
vrnda16@icloud.com

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I will be very honored to help in any way I can with this noble effort. This is indeed the key issue which would solve unlimited problems for ISKCON.

I thought that if we can diversify our activities and fields, while keeping respect towards each other, this could solve it. No need to philosophically fight over any issues, because Krishna as Time factor will show who understands Him and Srila Prabhupada better. And we know that good neighbors are living behind the tall fences. This could be the way to “agree to disagree”. And it will not be another schism, because in many religious organizations there are different orders. We only need to recognize it and keep them apart. Like a bird has a body and two wings, we could have Traditional ISKCON, Moderate ISKCON and Innovative ISKCON. Everyone could choose then where they want to belong. Maybe even including our GBC’s, Sannyasis and Gurus?

I can see that it’s already happening, and will surely be happening even more, then why not to make it official?

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 5:00 PM

**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Ajita

Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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Respected Maharajas and Prabhus,  
Please accept my humble obeisances,  
Sri Sri Guru Gaurangau Jayatah.

Please find below (in red) my response to Gaura Kesava Prabhu's email dated 8 Feb 2019. Sorry for the delay.

Thankyou,  
Your servant,

damodara das

## Reply to Gaura Kesava Prabhu's Arguments (email: 8 Feb 19)

[NOTE: If you are not able to see highlights or text colors you can download the attached pdf document to read our reply.]

Gaura Kesava Prabhu has widely written against our paper even after his previous contentions have been answered by us in an elaborate letter ([click here](#) to see the letter – here onwards FAQ letter or link: <https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/?p=890>) covering all his points. However, with due respect we say that he is repeating the same contentions without giving any arguments against our refutations to them or against what we have already explained. At least we, are not able to see how his repetitions to these arguments contain any refutations to our previous explanations to his contentions. This strategy does not bring any conclusion. It also compels one to speak louder and louder in order to prove one's point, as the logic of answering the points is not followed—imagine if I throw some contention on your position and you answer me with a genuine evidence, and still I repeat the same contention without showing how your answer is not valid, rather start just advertising my contention with loud voice all over internet and try winning the votes, what will you do? Obviously you have to also come out louder on the internet to show that you have already answered my contention.

In the elaborate replies of Gaura Kesava Prabhu, the central contention is that Bharadvaja samhita considers varna based on birth, which he repeatedly mentions as “Asura Caste-by-birth Varnashrama.” He sometimes calls even Sri Vaisnavas as “Caste-by-birth-Conscious Vaisnavas,” which literally, according to his own previous analysis, indicates that they are Asuras because they commit to the Asura caste-by-birth varnashram.

However, we have to be extremely careful to unthinkingly accept these statements; we are in danger of committing grave offenses to Sri Vaisnavas and also Madhvas. Has there been any instance where Srila Prabhupada has called any of these vaisnavas as Asuras?

In fact Srila Prabhupada writes (SB 4.31.10 purport) that Bharadvaja-samhita takes varna by quality not by birth—contrary to what Gaura Kesava Prabhu believes. Thus, the case is worth examining.

*Here is my reply, again (For point by point reply to his email, see the end of this email, [click here](#), or see the attached document):*

ISKCON gurus are not *śūdras*, even if they have been born in *śūdra* or mleccha families.

We all know that it is a mistake to think one is a *brāhmaṇa* merely because he has taken birth in a family of *brāhmaṇas*. Similarly, it is a mistake to think that one born in a family of *śūdras* or mlecchas is a *śūdra* or mlecccha. *Varṇa* is to be judged by the qualities one possesses, not by family lineage or heredity. Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us this on numerous occasions, establishing this fact from *guru-sādhu-śāstra*. Thus, when it is said that a *śūdra* is prohibited from becoming a *dikṣā-guru*, it means a person who is a *śūdra* by quality (*guṇa*) and karma (work). Someone who is actually qualified as a guru is never a *śūdra*.

**To be very clear—**

CASTE system means judging varna by hereditary considerations alone.

Judging varna by quality cannot be tagged as CASTE system.

Gaura Kesava Prabhu has tried to tag us by saying that we are proposing to follow CASTE system and thus asura varnasrama. Then he goes on to smash asuri caste system by bringing quotes of Srila Prabhupada. However, at the very beginning his stance that we are proposing CASTE system is FALSE and thus whatever he tries to claim based on that is all invalid. Even if one writes volumes of books on why CASTE system is wrong, it doesn't prove our point wrong, rather supports it.

**Objection: Bharadvaja-samhita does treat varna based on birth, isn't it? The word jati is used.**

We have not whimsically done this; there is a reason for taking varṇa based on qualities although the word *jāti* is mentioned. Here is evidence:

1. Srila Prabhupada himself has said that Bharadvaja samhita takes varna based on quality

It is not a fact that because one is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family he is automatically a *brāhmaṇa*. He has a better chance to become a *brāhmaṇa*, but unless he meets all the brahminical qualifications, he cannot be accepted as such. On the other hand, if the brahminical qualifications are found in the person of a *śūdra*, he should immediately be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa*. To substantiate this there are many quotations from Bhāgavatam, Mahābhārata, **Bharadvāja-samhitā and the pañcarātra**, as well as many other scriptures. (SB 4.31.10, Purport)

*This quote shows that the pancaratras and Bharadvaja-samhita describe varna by qualities and when we read them, we should take as such.*

2. Even Srimad Bhagavatam describes judging of varna based on birth and then mentions the activities of those who are born with different combinations.

*saṁskārā yatrāvicchināḥ sa dvijo 'jo jagāda yam  
jyādhayana-dānāni vihītāni dvijanmanām  
janma-karmāvadātānām kriyās cāśrama-coditāḥ  
TRANSLATION*

Those who have been reformed by the garbhādhāna ceremony and other prescribed reformatory methods, performed with

Vedic mantras and without interruption, and who have been approved by Lord Brahmā, are dvijas, or twice-born. Such brāhmanas, ksatriyas and vaiśyas, purified by their family traditions and by their behavior, should worship the Lord, study the Vedas and give charity. In this system, they should follow the principles of the four āśramas [brahmacharya, grhastha, vānaprastha and sannyāsa]. (SB 7.11.13)

Here the words used are *janma-karma-avadātānām* meaning those purified by family traditions and work; their duties are being mentioned. However, at the end (SB 7.11.35) it mentions the principle that actually the *varṇa* is based on quality and not heredity or birth considerations. The reason for mentioning it based on birth is given in the beginning of this verse—*samskāra yatrāvicchinnāḥ*—where the *garbhādhāna* etc. *samskāras* are not interrupted or are in place. Thus, usually when we find in sastras *varnas* mentioned based on birth we should take they actually are based on qualities.

#### IN SHORT—

In other yugas, VARNA WAS USUALLY JUDGED BASED ON BIRTH

In Kaliyuga, VARNA IS TO BE JUDGED BASED ON QUALITY OR SYMPTOMS (SB 7.11.35, Sukadeva's siddhanta pradipa commentary quoted by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura)

If I have qualities of Ksatriya, I am judged as Ksatriya. Then, rules and duties of Ksatriyas mentioned in different sastras are applicable on me.

3. If I reject every sastra that mentions duties based on birth, then I end up rejecting every sastra (including Bhagavatam); from where will I get information about what duties I should follow?

4. Another instance from Bhagavatam 11.17.16:

*varṇānām āśramānām ca janma-bhūmy-anusāriṇīḥ*

*āsan prakṛtayo nṛnām nicair nicottamottamāḥ*

#### TRANSLATION

The various occupational and social divisions of human society appeared according to inferior and superior natures manifest in the situation of the individual's birth.

Mark the highlighted word—*janma-bhūmy-anusāriṇaḥ*—meaning according to situation of one's birth. Then Lord Krishna starts describing the qualities and duties of various *varnas*. So, by the logic of Gaura Kesava Prabhu, Srimad Bhagavatam should also be tagged to promote Asuri-caste-by-birth-based *varnasrama*.

*Here is a technical explanation of how to understand above references:*

There are three words or concepts found in sastras—*Varṇa*, *Jāti*, and *Liṅga* (meaning gender).

Both, *jāti* and *liṅga* (gender) are determined from birth. One who is born of a brahmana lineage has his *jāti* as brahmana. One born of ksatriya lineage, *jāti* is ksatriya, and so on. One who is born with bodily symptoms of male is a male and so on.

It is not necessary that *jāti* and *varṇa* always match. In vedic culture, when *samskaras* were in place, almost always *jāti* and *varṇa* matched. Thus, both words are many times used in sastras as synonyms—means word *jāti* is used to denote *varṇa* and the word *varṇa* to denote *jāti*. Therefore some times there arise a confusion. However, in present times, as *samskaras* are not in place *jāti* and *varṇa* do not match.

Thus, it is clarified that *jāti* is by birth and not necessarily matches *varṇa*. Hence, when Bharadvaja-samhita says *sudra* etc., it has to be taken as *śūdra* by quality.

Now, *liṅga* or gender is also determined by birth. Basically *liṅga* or gender is determined by physical symptoms of the body. It can be masculine (*pulliṅga*) or feminine (*strī-liṅga*) or neutre (*napuṁsaka*). No matter *samskaras* are in place or not, *liṅga* or gender doesn't change; it remains dependent solely on the physical characteristics. A female may be highly *sāttvik* in quality still it cannot be said that she is a male, and vice-versa; there are males of very *tamasic* nature also. Thus, *liṅga* or gender doesn't depend on such qualities.

Thus, whenever we find in sastras words like *stri*, *nāri*, etc. it is to be understood that it is referring to feminine gender. Hence, it is feminine gender whose duties and prohibitions are being mentioned in sastras. Even if we see that a person born in a mlechha family lineage is highly *sāttvik* in nature, still the gender remains the same—if he is male he remains male and if she is female she remains female. Remember in vedic culture also we had males and females in all the *jātis* and *varṇas*. The duties of males and females are differently described—for males duties are divided into four *varṇas* and for females it is the same duty, that of serving their husbands.

Thus, when sastras say that women cannot become *dikṣā-guru*, it is prohibiting feminine gender from becoming *dikṣā-guru*. However, for a male, if he has quality of a brahmana, wherever he may have been born, he can become *dikṣā-guru* because sastras prescribe so.

## Detailed reply to GK Pr's email dated Feb 8, 2019 | 22:36

(Our reply in Red)

I am sending this much now, but this is incomplete. I have much more that I am writing in response to the Anti-VDG malcontents.

Using the words like malcontents and hypocrites Gaura Kesava Prabhu brings this discussion on the level of wrangling, technically called *Jalpa* and *Vitaṇḍā* in *nyāya-śāstras*. Definitions—

**Jalpa** is the process by which the exponent and opponent both try to attain victory over the other without making an honest attempt to come to the truth; there is an involvement of ego instead of a search for knowledge. Actually this is not a complex issue although some people want it to seem that way.

**Vitaṇḍā** is argumentation that is aimed exclusively at refuting or destroying an antagonist's position and that is not at all

concerned with establishing or defending one's own position.

Basically, he has tried to make two groups and created an atmosphere of war between the two, calling names to each other. This can never bring the discussion to *vāda*, which is the right discussion method to come to conclusion.

If we are hypocrites and malcontents, then how can anyone discuss with us to come to any conclusion? Then let us just have a fight or one of the parties just surrender. Is this the proposal Gaura Kesava Prabhu wants to put forward? I think using such words and clearly dividing devotees in two groups can only add to the divisiveness of an already divisive issue.

Actually this is not a complex issue although some people want it to seem that way.

This is true for both, pro-VDGs as well as anti-VDGs—both are malcontents meaning unsatisfied or discontented. Also both are trying to make the issue extremely complex by their interpretations not based on harmonizing guru-sadhu-sastra according to standard methods called *pramāṇa-śāstras*.

However, it should be noted that the issue is a complex one, otherwise the debate would not have sustained for last 20 years; I think it should be accepted that there are, at least seemingly, valid arguments on both the sides, otherwise we are just accusing the decision makers (in this case GBCs) to be heavily partial to one of the sides.

For the information of all, we are neither pro-VDGs nor anti-VDGs; we have harmonized all of Srila Prabhupada's direct instructions on the matter of VDGs without resorting to any sort of speculation; directly from sastras and sadhu applying the standard rules of *pramāṇa-śāstras*. The harmonization that we have presented does NOT need to assume and claim that—

- a. Rules of sastras are applicable only for times before 15<sup>th</sup> century
- b. When one is allowed to get initiated, he also becomes allowed to give initiation
- c. Srila Prabhupada did not want to establish Manu samhita in kaliyuga  
In Gaura-kesava Prabhu's language: "**Say NO to Manu (in kaliyuga)**"
- d. Srila Prabhupada discovered new kind of rules for kaliyuga in which men and women have equal rights
- e. etc.

In doing so we have taken help from sastra, Bharadvaja samhita, which is neither written by a pro-VDG nor anti-VDG faction. If someone is able to provide a better harmonization based on sastras, they are welcome.

### Our open Invitation:

Please bring some clear-cut direct evidence from sastras that say that women should become *diksa-guru*. It should be as clear as the evidence we have supplied from Bharadvaja-samhita 1.42-43—

*na jātu mantra-dā nārī*—a woman can never become *dīkṣā-guru*

*nārhanṭy-ācāryatām kvacit*—they never deserve to take the position of an *ācārya*

[UPPER CASE USED FOR EMPHASIS IN QUOTES BELOW, because bolding may be lost in sending emails through some servers]

{Any comments made by me within other quotes are placed within curly brackets}

WARNING: Beware of persons who tell you that we can understand what Srila Prabhupada wanted for his ISKCON society by quoting obscure sastras or by consulting Caste-by-birth-Conscious Vaisnavas.

As explained before, our acharyas have quoted and followed Bharadvaja-samhita and thus it is legitimate sastra. I think we should also **BEWARE** of persons who are affected by the ideas like "**Saying NO to Manu (in kaliyuga)**," quoting just a single obscure quote of Srila Prabhupada that was person specific, against volumes of his quotes which fully support Manu samhita and his wish to apply it for whole society as well as in ISKCON. This is *sastra-ninda* and one is advised to stay away blasphemers of sastras. It makes us remember Manusmriti Dahan Din or the festival day of burning of Manu samhita (December 25, 1927 on which Dr. Ambedkar gathered crowd from India and officially burned Manu samhita).

The reasons were the same as Gaura Kesava Prabhu puts forward in his arguments—birth based caste system. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and alongwith him the Indian constitution did the same mistake that Gaura Kesava Prabhu is proposing here—throwing the baby out with the bath water, that is throwing the whole scientific, quality based varnasrama system, out with the perverted jati (birth) based caste varnasrama system.

For more on "Say No to Manu-samhita" issue, [click here](#).

arcye visnau sila-dhir gurusu nara-matir vaisnave jati-buddhir

visnor va vaisnavanam kali-mala-mathane pada-tirthe 'mbu-buddhih

sri-visnor namni mantre sakala-kalusa-he sabda-samanya-buddhir

visnau sarvesvarese tad-itara-sama-dhir yasya va naraki sah

If one thinks that the worshipable salagrama-sila is a mere stone, that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being or that a pure Vaisnava preaching the bhakti cult all over the world is a member of a particular caste or material division of



society, he is considered a naraki, a candidate for hellish life. CC Antya 6.294 (Quoted from Padma Purana)

N.B. Nara-matir means literally “[ordinary] person-mentality” if we consider a Vaisnava or Vaisnavi guru or teacher to be an ordinary human being that is a hellish mentality and Jati-buddhir means literally “birth-mentality” if we consider an aspect of a Vaisnavas or Vaisnavis material birth to be a disqualification, it is a hellish mentality. Females are also a material division of society.

The malcontents against VDGs (Vaisnavi Diksha Gurus) say that the above does not apply to those born female, it only applies to those born male.

This is misrepresented. We never said that it doesn’t apply to vaisnava women; in fact please have a look at our reply—**THIS POINT HAS NOT EVEN BEEN TOUCHED IN REPLY.**

However, as Gaura Kesava Prabhu has brought this point we would answer it here. The whole point in this quote from Padma-puran is that one should not judge the spiritual advancement of a vaisnava from his birth, that is, if he/she has lower birth it should not be judged that they must be spiritually lower while those of higher birth should not be judged as spiritually higher. Spiritual Krishna conscious status of a vaisnava should not be judged by his/her birth. That is the point here.

Also, Vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhi means to see vaiṣṇava by his lineage viz. brāhmaṇa, etc. Thus, as we are not seeing vaiṣṇavas’ material aspect (or varṇa) by lineage but by qualities, it doesn’t create the offense of vaiṣṇave-jāti-buddhi.

Moreover, *guruṣu-nara mati*, doesn’t say anything about the gender; it just speaks about the *guru-tattva* in general. Gaura-kesava Prabhu has added the word “vaisnavis” from his side taking it for granted that vaisnavis are also *diksa-gurus*. However, first it is to be fixed that who is a bona fide guru and then *guruṣu-nara-mati* maxim is to be applied; if one’s guru is not a bona fide guru, then seeing him as ordinary man will not create the offense of *guruṣu-nara-mati*.

As this contention of Gaura Kesava Prabhu was based on his misunderstanding of our stance, that we take varna by birth (jati) and not by quality, whatever he smashes from here onwards based on this misunderstanding, is just smashing the words which we never spoke or smashing the stance which we never had at first place. In the language of nyaya-sastra this tactic is called *sāmānya-cchala*—Quibble in respect of a genus (*sambhavato ’rthātisāmānya-yogād-asambhūtārtha-kalpanā*, Nyāya-sūtra 1.2.13).

Thus they consider the qualification for being a Vaisnava Mantra Diksha guru to be dependent on a customary or social convention i.e. that only dvija born males can be diksha gurus.

Srila Prabhupada did not teach or agree to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those certain sastras which deal with hereditary, customary social or ecclesiastical conventions, as a basis for the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha Guru.

Srila Prabhupada did not accept that the qualification to be guru is based on customary hereditary, ecclesiastic or social considerations. He tells us this clearly in the section defining Guru Tattva in Caitanya Caritamṛta (the first chapter of Adi Lila teaches Gaudiya Vaisnava Guru Tattva):

Sri Jiva Gosvami advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding. CC Adi 1.35 purport

Accepting a guru ONLY from a group of hereditary lines of dvija born male gurus is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from a customary social group i.e. only (dvija) males is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from an ecclesiastically approved group i.e. approved by a Church system (ecclesiastical convention means Church rules or GBC resolutions) is wrong as per this statement.

One may accept a guru from one of the above groups, but one must not think that only those who are hereditary gurus, male gurus or Church approved gurus are the ONLY spiritually qualified persons to be guru. If one does then as stated above in the Padma Purana, he has a hellish mentality.

Here is the quote with its previous line that Gaura-kesava Prabhu did not supply—

It is imperative that a serious person accept a **bona fide spiritual master in terms of the śāstric injunctions**. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions.

Please note the highlighted words “bona fide spiritual master in terms of the SASTRIC INJUNCTIONS.” Srila Prabhupada did not say that we do not follow sastric injunctions in judging bona fide gurus, but completely the opposite.

**Where is the sastric injunction that says that women should become diksa-guru?**

**There is sastric injunction that women cannot be diksa-guru.**

Thus Gaura Kesava Prabhu’s stance is refuted, unless he brings a sastric injunction that explicitly says that women should be diksa-guru, as clearly as it says that women cannot become *diksa-guru*, in the Narada-pancaratra 1.42-43—*na jātu mantra-dā nārī; nārhantyācāryatām kvacit*.

Another mistake of Gaura Kesava Prabhu is in the onterpretation of the second line—

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions.

Here Srila Prabhupada uses the word “or” to join the words “hereditary” and “customary social.” Thus, “customary social” is a gloss to “hereditary” conventions. This is also supported by the fact that hereditary considerations were social customs in those times. This means Srila Prabhupada is saying—

**Hereditary and Ecclesiastical** considerations are not to be taken.

Thus, Srila Prabhupada is refuting considering brahmana etc. by birth not by qualities.

We see things in a more spiritually egalitarian sastric way than the malcontents:

“Spiritually egalitarian sastric way” is the idea of Gaura-kesava Prabhu. Where is egalitarianism mentioned in sastras or even in spiritual science? Does this word “Spiritual Egalitarianism” come from Srila Prabhupada or from any sastra? This seems to be an attempt to mislead audience by misusing terms.

Srila Prabhupada establishes that there has never been a time when Krishna’s vedic society was egalitarian. Varnasrama society is not egalitarian and has been in place from time immemorial. Thus, in past it was not egalitarian, in present it is not, then how in future it can be egalitarian? Srila Prabhupada says—

**Prof. Kotovsky:** If you would trace the old sūtras, texts, of Vedic literature, you would find much more simple and egalitarian society. And there is an opinion that this varṇāśrama system was introduced into Indian society on the late stage of Vedic era but not from the beginning, about... If you would analyze scientifically the old texts, you’ll find that... (break)....about the duration of this period because unfortunately the old classic India we have not so much information.

**Prabhupāda:** But so far... So far we are concerned, this Bhagavad-gītā... It is mentioned in the Bhagavad-gītā, cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam [Bg. 4.13]. Now, this Bhagavad-gītā was spoken five thousand years ago, and in the Bhagavad-gītā it is said that “This system of Bhagavad-gītā was first spoken by Me to the Sun-god.” So if you take estimation of that period, it comes forty millions of years. So whether the European scholars can trace out the history of at least for five thousand years together, not to speak of forty millions?

>> Conv. Moscow, Jun 22, 1971

Yasoda doesn’t go to rear cows or agriculture; neither she demands it. She is satisfied in her motherly duties. No egalitarianism in the spiritual world either. Souls are spiritually equal, but have different duties in service of Krishna according to their svarupa; cows don’t say “why we are only cows, why are we not gopis?”

The first spiritual lesson that we are all taught when becoming Vaisnavas is “You are not this body”. Spiritually we are all equal. Of course materially we are not equal. And Srila Prabhupada taught us in certain circumstances we have to consider these material differences. In his famous discussion about VDGs he says this:

Interview with Professors O’Connell, Motilal and Shivaram —June 18, 1976, Toronto

"Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all. Otherwise, the rights are the same."

And in the second VDG discussion (Conversation San Diego, Jun 29, 1972) Srila Prabhupada clarifies or qualifies it that he was speaking about those who are fully self realized, reached above the bodily platform where they are able to see even humans and animals as equal—

It is not that woman cannot be *ācārya*. Generally, they do not become. In very special case. But Jāhnavā-devī was accepted as, but she did not declare. ...

**Prabhupāda:** Kṛṣṇa does not make any discrimination. Kṛṣṇa does not make. Whatever difference is there, it is bodily difference. But as soul, there is equality. So whatever difference we make, that is bodily difference. So when one is above the bodily concept of life, there is no difference. Why woman? Even cats and dogs. Woman is human being. Even cats and dogs, they have got the same spirit soul. So a learned scholar will see from the spiritual platform. Then there is equality.

And at another place Srila Prabhupada qualifies this stage of being above bodily concept of life as not being theoretical but practical and that until then we have to discriminate (SB 7.12.10, Purport)—

Here is another important warning that a man must save himself from attraction to woman. Until one is self-realized, fully independent of the illusory conception of the material body, the duality of man and woman must undoubtedly continue, but when one is actually self-realized this distinction ceases.

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini*

*śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

"The humble sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]." (Bg. 5.18) On the spiritual platform, the learned person not only gives up the duality of man and woman, but also gives up the duality of man and animal. This is the test of self-realization. One must realize perfectly that the living being is spirit soul but is tasting various types of material bodies. One may theoretically understand this, but when one has practical realization, then he actually becomes a paṇḍita, one who knows. Until that time, the duality continues, and the conception of man and woman also continues. In this stage, one should be extremely careful about mixing with women. No one should think himself perfect and forget the śāstric instruction that one should be very careful about associating even with his daughter, mother or sister, not to speak of other women.

Thus, the whole idea of Gaura Kesava Prabhu that distinction between duties of male and female devotees disappear as soon as they accept Krishna consciousness in sadhana stage is not true. Hence, his refutations that follow based on above misconception of his, are also answered. However, we will try to explain the real meaning of the sastric evidences that he is

bringing in supporting his stance as we have to have sastra-yukti or harmonization of sastras. We do not want to neglect any evidence, either supporting or against pro-VDGs. That is the proper method of harmonization and is called *sastra-sangati*.

This objection that the anti-VDG malcontents have about the mixing of men and women is thus not applicable to the position of guru.

(And if they were so worried about men and women mixing due to VDGs they would also be similarly worried about Sannyasis initiating young female disciples.

But we see that they are hypocrites and don't consider that a VDG would perhaps be a better guru choice for a young female disciple than a Sannyasi. We, on the other hand, accept that a guru of any gender may have a disciple of any gender as long as they follow Srila Prabhupadas warnings about mixing of the genders i.e. "Of course, because superficially, bodily, there is some distinction, so we keep women separately from men, that's all.")

Our position is to emphasize the spiritual equality of all beings (and to only consider the material differences for ordinary mundane purposes and never spiritual ones).

You cannot separate material with spiritual purposes in practice.

Kirtana is absolutely a spiritual act. However, we would not suggest to young men and women devotees (even if sincere) to dance together.

Performing drama for Krishna lila is purely spiritual. However, we would not suggest that both men and women take part in it and that men dress and massage women or vice versa as Ramananda Raya was doing.

Chanting Hare Krishna is completely spiritual, while following four regulative principles are material considerations (not at all spiritual) related to body only. Then why Srila Prabhupada kept these material considerations in getting initiated?

Being guru is completely spiritual. However, we would not suggest that a male guru have a female secretary and that she can sleep in the same room or even house.

Srila Prabhupada is completely spiritual, still he set standards for us. When he met his sister (although both were at the fag end of their old age) he chastised one of his brahmachari disciples who left Prabhupada alone with his sister in the room. Prabhupada said that a sannyasi should never be alone. This shows his stance—even though purely spiritual purposes, the difference must be maintained.

Cooking for Krishna is completely spiritual activity. Still Srila Prabhupada did not want male and female devotees to cook together unless they were husband-wives.

Deity worship is completely a spiritual activity, still Srila Prabhupada did not want male and female devotees to be together in altar unless they were husband-wives.

Deity worship is completely a spiritual activity, still Srila Prabhupada set a rule that a female devotee in menses cannot worship deities or enter altar.

Deity worship is completely a spiritual activity, still Srila Prabhupada advised his female disciple to leave deity worship if it is not favorable to her material duty of bringing up her baby child.

ISKCON is a spiritual society. Therefore, GBC's activity of managing ISKCON is spiritual. Still Srila Prabhupada did not appoint even one woman disciple as GBC.

Temple president's activity of managing ISKCON temple is spiritual. Still Srila Prabhupada did not appoint even one woman disciple as Temple president.

Although being fully surrendered as brahmacharinis is a spiritual activity, Srila Prabhupada did not want his women disciples to remain unmarried and practice Krishna consciousness, although, for time being, he could not get them married and thus established Brahmacharini ashram as the best use of bad bargain. He said—

That the Brahmacharini ashram is a good success is very good news. But the best thing will be if the grown-up Brahmacharinis get married. According to Vedic culture, woman is never to remain independent. I shall be glad if the Brahmacharinis can have nice husbands, and live as Grhasthas. But if they cannot find out good husbands, it is better to remain a Brahmacharini all the life, even though it is little difficult. (Letter to Satsvarūpa, 8 Aug 1968)

And there are volumes of evidences establishing that, when we practice Krishna consciousness in material world, in sadhaka level, we are bound to follow rules of sastras meant for our material conditioning alongwith cultivating Krishna consciousness.

vidya-vinaya-sampanne brahmane gavi hastini

sunī caiva sva-pake ca paṇḍitah sama-darsinah

The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]. Gita 5.18

Already explained above.

One can object that elephants, cows, dogs and dog-eaters are all spiritually equal to a learned and gentle brahmana but they

cannot be Vaisnava diksha gurus unless they know the science of Krsna Consciousness perfectly. We agree.

My point was that Srila Prabhupada says that, when one is able to realize that there is no difference between animals and humans, then one is said to be situated on the platform of equality. One doesn't even notice the differences as Sukadeva Gosvami did not even notice difference between male and female. It is then, when there is no difference between men and women. The very idea that women should be allowed to be diksa-gurus and that they are not allowed, clearly shows that we all are noticing differences between men and women and thus we have not yet reached that platform. Otherwise the whole idea of women's rights would not have come in to picture as there would not have been identification with women or men—then where is the question of women (or men) becoming offended on being not given their rights.

That is why Lord Caitanya has given the spiritual definition of who can be a guru in Gaudiya Sampradaya:

Using the below quote from Srila Prabhupada, Gaura Kesava Prabhu has tried to smash the point that WE NEVER MADE—"guru should be from brahmana CASTE and not from sudra CASTE."

Our point was that brahmana, sudra etc. is to be judged by **QUALITY** and **not** by **BIRTH** or **HEREDITY**. However, Gaura Kesava Prabhu labeled our argument as CASTE consciousness, saying that we want to judge guru by CASTE bringing sastras that judge guru by CASTE considerations. Then he has tried to smash it by the quotes of Srila Prabhupada that reject caste considerations.

However, let it be CRYSTAL CLEAR—

CASTE means by birth or hereditary consideration. We are advocating varna by **QUALITY**. When it is said that sudra cannot be guru it means one who is sudra by quality cannot be guru. Thus, no matter how much one smashes varna by birth consideration, it doesn't refute our point in any way; on the contrary it supports our point.

My explanation of the below quote of Prabhupada as quoted by Gaura Kesava Prabhu:

Please note the highlighted portions in the quote. Please notice the words "caste," "birth," "heredity," etc.; they are repeated so many times. This shows that Srila Prabhupada is refuting the birth or hereditary consideration in this verse and not the real varna by quality consideration; in fact he quotes the verse—*yasya-yal-lakṣaṇam proktaṁ*—specifically meant for judging varna by quality. Prabhupada begins with the point that birth conditions should not be considered, and in the last paragraph also he concludes that hereditary considerations are not acceptable to vaisnavas. Prabhupada has not rejected the quality based varna considerations for vaisnavas. Moreover, in the last paragraph he completely clarifies it by saying "This does not mean that people should take to His teachings and remain sudras or candalas." This means that a devotee who maintains the qualities of sudras or lower, one cannot become guru.

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya

yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya

SYNONYMS

kiba—whether; vipra—a brahmana; kiba—whether; nyasi—a sannyasi; sudra—a sudra; kene—why; naya—not; yei—anyone who; krsna-tattva-vetta—a knower of the science of Krsna; sei—that person; guru—the spiritual master; haya—is.

TRANSLATION

"Whether one is a brahmana, a sannyasi or a sudra—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Krsna."

PURPORT

This verse is very important to the Krsna consciousness movement. In his Amṛta-pravaha-bhāṣya, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that one should not think that because Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu was **born a brahmana** and was situated in the topmost spiritual order as a sannyasi, it was improper for Him to receive instructions from Srila Ramananda Raya, who belonged to the **sudra caste**. To clarify this matter, Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu informed Ramananda Raya that knowledge of Krsna consciousness is more **important than caste**. In the system of varnasrama-dharma there are various duties for the brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaiśyas and sudras. Actually the brahmana is supposed to be the spiritual master of all other varnas, or classes, but as far as Krsna consciousness is concerned, everyone is capable of becoming a spiritual master because knowledge in Krsna consciousness is on the platform of the spirit soul.

To spread Krsna consciousness, one need only be cognizant of the science of the spirit soul. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER ONE IS A BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA, VAISYA, SUDRA, SANNYASI, GRHASTHA OR WHATEVER. IF ONE SIMPLY UNDERSTANDS THIS SCIENCE, HE CAN BECOME A SPIRITUAL MASTER.

It is stated in the Hari-bhakti-vilasa that one should not accept initiation from a person who is not in the brahminical order if there is a fit person in the brahminical order present. This instruction is meant for those who are overly dependent on the mundane social order and is suitable for those who want to remain in mundane life. IF ONE UNDERSTANDS THE TRUTH OF KRSNA CONSCIOUSNESS AND SERIOUSLY DESIRES TO ATTAIN TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PERFECTION OF LIFE, HE CAN ACCEPT A SPIRITUAL MASTER FROM ANY **SOCIAL STATUS**, PROVIDED THE SPIRITUAL MASTER IS FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA. SRILA BHAKTISIDDHANTA SARASVATI THAKURA ALSO STATES THAT ALTHOUGH ONE IS SITUATED AS A BRAHMANA, KSATRIYA, VAISYA, SUDRA, BRAHMACARI, VANAPRASTHA, GRHASTHA OR SANNYASI, IF HE IS CONVERSANT IN THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA HE CAN BECOME A SPIRITUAL MASTER AS VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU, DIKSA-

GURU OR SIKSA-GURU. The spiritual master who first gives information about spiritual life is called the vartma-pradarsaka-guru, the spiritual master who initiates according to the regulations of the sastras is called the diksa-guru, and the spiritual master who gives instructions for elevation is called the siksa-guru. FACTUALLY THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A SPIRITUAL MASTER DEPEND ON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA. It does not matter whether he is a brahmana, ksatriya, sannyasi or sudra. THIS INJUNCTION GIVEN BY SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU IS NOT AT ALL AGAINST THE INJUNCTIONS OF THE SASTRAS. In the Padma Purana it is said:

na sudra bhagavad-bhaktas te 'pi bhagavatottamah

sarva-varnesu te sudra ye na bhakta janardane

One who is actually advanced in spiritual knowledge of Krsna is never a sudra, even though he may have been born in a sudra family. However, even if a vipra, or brahmana, is very expert in the six brahminical activities (pathana, pathana, yajana, yajana, dana, pratigraha) and is also well versed in the Vedic hymns, he cannot become a spiritual master unless he is a Vaisnava. But if one is **born in the family of candalas** yet is well versed in Krsna consciousness, he can become a guru. These are the sastric injunctions, and strictly following these injunctions, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, as a grhastha named Sri Visvambhara, was initiated by a sannyasi-guru named Isvara Puri. Similarly, Sri Nityananda Prabhu was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, a sannyasi. According to others, however, He was initiated by Laksmipati Tirtha. Advaita Acarya, although a grhastha, was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, and many devotees **born in caste brahmana families** were initiated by Sri Rasikananda (a disciple of Sri Syamananda Prabhu), although Rasikananda was **not born in a brahmana family**. There are many instances in which **a born brahmana** took initiation from a person who was **not born in a brahmana family**. The brahminical symptoms are explained in Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.11.35), wherein it is stated:

yasya yal-laksanam proktam pumso varnabhivyanjakam

yad anyatrapa drsyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiset

If a person is **born in a sudra family** but has all the qualities of a spiritual master, he should be accepted not only as a brahmana but as a qualified spiritual master also. This is also the instruction of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura therefore introduced the sacred thread ceremony for all Vaisnavas according to the rules and regulations.

Sometimes a Vaisnava who is a bhajanandi does not take the savitra-samskara (sacred thread initiation) {SAVITRA-SAMSKARA MENTIONED HERE REFERS TO THE UPANAYANAM SAMSKARA BY WHICH THE GURU BRINGS THE DISCIPLE CLOSER FOR TEACHING, THE MAIN ELEMENT OF IT IS THE TEACHING OF THE VEDIC SAVITRI OR BRAHMA GAYATRI MANTRA}, but this does not mean that this system should be used for preaching work. There are two kinds of Vaisnavas—bhajanandi and gosthy-anandi. A bhajanandi is not interested in preaching work, but a gosthy-anandi is interested in spreading Krsna consciousness to benefit the people and increase the number of Vaisnavas. A Vaisnava is understood to be above the position of a brahmana. As a preacher, he should be recognized as a brahmana; otherwise there may be a misunderstanding of his position as a Vaisnava. However, a **Vaisnava brahmana is not selected on the basis of his birth but according to his qualities**. Unfortunately, those who are unintelligent do not know the difference between a brahmana and a Vaisnava. They are under the impression that unless one is a brahmana he cannot be a spiritual master. **For this reason only, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu makes the statement in this verse:**

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya

yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]

If one becomes a guru, he is automatically a brahmana. SOMETIMES **A CASTE GURU** {OR AN ANTI-VDG MALCONTENT} SAYS THAT YE KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA, SEI GURU HAYA MEANS THAT ONE WHO IS NOT A BRAHMANA MAY BECOME A SIKSA-GURU OR A VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU BUT NOT AN INITIATOR GURU. ACCORDING to such **caste gurus, birth and family ties are considered foremost**. However, the **hereditary consideration** is not acceptable to Vaisnavas. THE WORD GURU IS EQUALLY APPLICABLE TO THE VARTMA-PRADARSAKA-GURU, SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU. UNLESS WE ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE ENUNCIATED BY SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU, THIS KRSNA CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT CANNOT SPREAD ALL OVER THE WORLD. According to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's intentions, prthivite ache yata nagaradi-grama sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama. [CB Antya-khanda 4.126] Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's cult must be preached all over the world. **This does not mean that people should take to His teachings and remain sudras or candalas**. As soon as one is trained as a pure Vaisnava, he must be accepted as a bona fide brahmana. This is the essence of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's instructions in this verse. CC Mad 8.128

But one may counter that not all vartma-pradarsaka-guru or patha-pradarsaka-guru, siksa-gurus are qualified to be diksa gurus.

We agree also with this. Those that are not qualified are not "YEI KRSNA-TATTVA-VETTA" OR "KNOW[ER]S [OF] THE SCIENCE OF KRSNA [FULLY]". Another aspect that a mantra diksa guru has to possess is he or she has to be himself or herself initiated into the Vaisnava mantras that they will give to others. One cannot initiate another into a mantra that one is not himself or herself initiated into. That is a given.

So let us look at two examples of Vaisnavi vartma-pradarsaka-gurus or patha-pradarsaka-gurus who were not qualified to give diksha. Let us see why.

1. Suniti the mother of Dhruva maharaja.

sa ca svarlokam aroksyan

sunitim jananim dhruvah

anvasmarad agam hitva

dinam yasye tri-vistapam

Dhruva was seated in the transcendental airplane, which was just about to start, when he remembered his poor mother, Suniti. He thought to himself, "How shall I go alone to the Vaikuntha planet and leave behind my poor mother?"

PURPORT

Dhruva had a feeling of obligation to his mother, Suniti. It was Suniti who HAD GIVEN HIM THE CLUE WHICH HAD NOW ENABLED HIM TO BE PERSONALLY CARRIED TO THE VAIKUNTHA PLANET BY THE ASSOCIATES OF LORD VISNU. He now remembered her and wanted to take her with him. ACTUALLY, DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S MOTHER, SUNITI, WAS HIS PATHA-PRADARSAKA-GURU. PATHA-PRADARSAKA-GURU MEANS "THE GURU, OR THE SPIRITUAL MASTER, WHO SHOWS THE WAY." Such a guru is sometimes called siksa-guru. ALTHOUGH NARADA MUNI WAS HIS DIKSA-GURU (INITIATING SPIRITUAL MASTER), SUNITI, HIS MOTHER, WAS THE FIRST WHO GAVE HIM INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THE FAVOR OF THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD. It is the duty of the siksa-guru or diksa-guru to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. ACCORDING TO SASTRIC INJUNCTIONS, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU, AND GENERALLY THE SIKSA-GURU LATER ON BECOMES THE DIKSA-GURU. SUNITI, HOWEVER, BEING A WOMAN, AND SPECIFICALLY HIS MOTHER, COULD NOT BECOME DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S DIKSA-GURU. Still, he was not less obliged to Suniti. There was no question of carrying Narada Muni to Vaikunthaloka, but Dhruva Maharaja thought of his mother.

Whatever plan the Supreme Personality of Godhead contemplates immediately fructifies. Similarly, a devotee who is completely dependent on the Supreme Lord can also fulfill his wishes by the grace of the Lord. The Lord fulfills His wishes independently, but a devotee fulfills his wishes simply by being dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore as soon as Dhruva Maharaja thought of his poor mother, he was assured by the associates of Visnu that Suniti was also going to Vaikunthaloka, in another plane. Dhruva Maharaja had thought that he was going alone to Vaikunthaloka, leaving behind his mother, which was not very auspicious because people would criticize him for going alone to Vaikunthaloka and not carrying with him Suniti, who had given him so much. But Dhruva also considered that he was not personally the Supreme. Therefore, if Krsna fulfilled his desires, only then would it be possible. Krsna could immediately understand his mind, and He told Dhruva that his mother was also going with him. This incident proves that a pure devotee like Dhruva Maharaja can fulfill all his desires; by the grace of the Lord, he becomes exactly like the Lord, and thus whenever he thinks of anything, his wish is immediately fulfilled. SB 3.12.32

{Note above that Suniti "HAD GIVEN HIM THE CLUE WHICH HAD NOW ENABLED HIM TO BE PERSONALLY CARRIED TO THE VAIKUNTHA PLANET BY THE ASSOCIATES OF LORD VISNU", she had not given him more than a clue by telling him to go to the forest, and perform austerities (meditation was the yuga dharma) for pleasing Lord Visnu. "ALTHOUGH NARADA MUNI WAS HIS DIKSA-GURU (INITIATING SPIRITUAL MASTER), SUNITI, HIS MOTHER, WAS THE FIRST WHO GAVE HIM INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THE FAVOR OF THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD." "ACCORDING TO SASTRIC INJUNCTIONS, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIKSA-GURU AND DIKSA-GURU, AND GENERALLY THE SIKSA-GURU LATER ON BECOMES THE DIKSA-GURU. The fact is that Suniti advise to Dhruva was incomplete, because she although she advised him to go to the forest, perform austerities and meditate on Lord Visnu she did not give him the mantra by which to meditate on Lord Visnu. WHY? Anti-VDG malcontents make much of the next sentence in the purport. They try to use it to apply to all women and all mothers. However there are many reasons why this is not so. Let us examine the facts. SUNITI, HOWEVER, BEING A WOMAN, AND SPECIFICALLY HIS MOTHER, COULD NOT BECOME DHRUVA MAHARAJA'S DIKSA-GURU." They say that Suniti could not be Dhruvas diksha guru because she was a woman and specifically his mother. Yes, we agree. But this is not the full explanation. In the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society that Suniti and Dhruva lived during Satya Yuga women did not take initiation at all. It was considered enough for them to follow the directions of their husband who was seen as their pati-guru. So, yes we agree that in the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society and in Satya Yuga women and mothers could not be diksha gurus. They were not initiated and so they were unable to transmit a mantra which they were never initiated into themselves. Let us see the next verse and purport and see if Srila Prabhupada addresses this point.}

Gaura Kesava Prabhu's argument is that Suniti could not become diksa-guru because she was a woman and as woman could not receive mantra in vedic culture, it is obvious that she could not give mantra also and thus become diksa-guru. Thus, if women could receive mantra in vedic society then they could have been able to become diksa-guru and give it also. Although we have repeatedly answered this question in different forums, I think we have not supplied this to Gaura Kesava Prabhu. We will try to answer it here.

To become dikṣā-guru, getting initiated into the mantras is not the only qualification. It is a necessary condition, not a sufficient one. In Vedic culture, all the three varṇas—brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, and vaiśyas—received mantras at the time of initiation. But only brāhmaṇas were allowed to give mantras and be dikṣā-gurus. Similarly, when pāñcarātrika-vidhi allows women to receive mantras in initiation, they do not automatically become eligible also to give mantras and be dikṣā-guru.

Moreover, Nārada Pañcarātra states that women should not become dikṣā-guru. Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā (Nārada Pañcarātra) clearly states that women are eligible to receive initiation (1.14–15) but are not eligible to give initiation and be dikṣā-guru (1.42–43). This also matches with Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.12.32, purport, wherein Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "Suniti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Mahārāja's dikṣā-guru."

Those who believe that because the Pañcarātras allow women to get initiated they can also give mantras and be dikṣā-gurus base their argument on the set of verses from Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (1.194–198) mentioned below.



However, it is to be noted that these verses clearly mention that the allowance given to women is for receiving initiation and thus chanting mantras and worshipping the Deities of the Lord. It nowhere mentions that women are allowed to give mantras and become dīkṣā-guru.

***athādhikāra-nirṇayaḥ***

***tāntrikeṣu ca mantreṣu dīkṣāyām yoṣitām api***

***sādhvīnām adhikāro 'sti sūdrādīnām ca sad-dhiyām***

Now begins the discussion of who is eligible—

Chaste and saintly women, and saintly-hearted sūdras, and so on are qualified to be initiated in the chanting of mantras from the Tantras.

***tathā ca smṛty-artha-sāre pādme ca vaiśākha-***

***māhātmye śrī-nāradāambarīṣa-samvāde***

***āgamoktena mārgeṇa strī-śūdrais caiva pūjanam***

***kartavyam śraddhayā viṣṇoś cintayitvā patim hṛdi***

In the Smṛty-artha-sāra, as well as in the Padma Purāṇa, Vaiśākha-māhātmya, in a conversation of Śrī Nārada and Śrī Ambarīṣa it is said: "Following the path described in the Āgamas, women and sūdras may faithfully worship Lord Viṣṇu and meditate on Him as the Lord in the heart.

***sūdrāṇām caiva bhavati nāmnā vai devatārcaṇam***

***sarve cāgama-mārgeṇa kuryur vedānusāriṇā***

"Following the path of the Āgamas, which themselves follow the path of the Vedas, women and sūdras may worship the Supreme Lord by chanting His holy names.

***strīṇām āpy adhikāro 'sti viṣṇor ārādhānādiṣu***

***pati-priya-hitānām ca śrutir eṣā sanātani***

"Women who desire the welfare of their husbands are also entitled to worship Lord Viṣṇu. That is the conclusion of the eternal Vedas."

***agastya-saṁhitāyām, śrī-rāma-mantra-rājam uddīśya***

***śuci-vrata-tamaḥ sūdrā dhārmikā dvija-sevakāḥ***

***striyaḥ pati-vratās cānye pratilomānuloma-jāḥ***

***lokās cāṇḍāla-paryantāḥ sarve 'py atrādhikāriṇaḥ***

In the Agastya-saṁhitā, in relation to the king of all mantras, the Rāma-mantra, it is said: "Religious and pure sūdras, who are servants of the brāhmaṇas, as well as chaste women, those born in pratiloma and anuloma families, and everyone else, down even to the cāṇḍālas, are qualified to worship Lord Viṣṇu in this way."

Thus replied also for the next verse quoted and another section on Hari-bhakti-vilasa.

iti vyavasitam tasya

vyavasaya surottamau

darsayam asatur devim

puro yanena gacchatim

The great associates of Vaikunthaloka, Nanda and Sunanda, could understand the mind of Dhruva Maharaja, and thus they showed him that his mother, Suniti, was going forward in another plane.

PURPORT

This incident proves that the siksa- or diksa-guru who has a disciple who strongly executes devotional service like Dhruva Maharaja can be carried by the disciple even though the instructor is not as advanced. ALTHOUGH SUNITI WAS AN INSTRUCTOR TO DHRUVA MAHARAJA, SHE COULD NOT GO TO THE FOREST BECAUSE SHE WAS A WOMAN, NOR COULD SHE EXECUTE AUSTERITIES AND PENANCES AS DHRUVA MAHARAJA DID. Still, Dhruva Maharaja was able to take his mother with him. Similarly, Prahlada Maharaja also delivered his atheistic father, Hiranyakasipu. THE CONCLUSION IS THAT A DISCIPLE OR AN OFFSPRING WHO IS A VERY STRONG DEVOTEE CAN CARRY WITH HIM TO VAIKUNTHALOKA EITHER HIS FATHER, MOTHER OR SIKSA- OR DIKSA-GURU. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura used to say, "If I could perfectly deliver even one soul back home, back to Godhead, I would think my mission—propagating Kṛṣṇa consciousness—to be successful." The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is spreading now all over the world, and sometimes I think that even though I am crippled in many ways, if one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Maharaja, then he will be able to carry me with him to Vaikunthaloka. SB 3.12.33


{ALTHOUGH SUNITI WAS AN INSTRUCTOR TO DHRUVA MAHARAJA, SHE COULD NOT GO TO THE FOREST BECAUSE SHE WAS A WOMAN, NOR COULD SHE EXECUTE AUSTERITIES AND PENANCES AS DHRUVA MAHARAJA DID. So Suniti because she was a woman could not go to the forest, could not execute austerities and penances, thus she could not perform the yuga dharma of Satya Yuga. How then could she go back to Godhead. Simple. In Satya Yuga a woman could go back to Godhead

by following the path of her pati-guru or in this case being picked up by her perfected son. She was not initiated because the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society she lived in expected her to simply follow her husband as pati-guru and not to take initiation herself or go to the forest and perform austerities and penances. "THE CONCLUSION IS THAT A DISCIPLE OR AN OFFSPRING WHO IS A VERY STRONG DEVOTEE CAN CARRY WITH HIM TO VAIKUNTHALOKA EITHER HIS FATHER, MOTHER OR SIKSA- OR DIKSA-GURU." So women in the Caste-by-birth Varnashrama society of Satya Yuga could attain Vaikuntha either by following their husbands path i.e. pati-guru, or by having a siksha disciple like Dhruva maharaja who became perfected by going to the forest, performing austerities and penances and practicing meditation on the mantra given by his diksha guru Narada Muni. But women in that time and circumstance could not give mantra diksha because they had never taken mantra diksha neither could they go to the forest and perform the austerities, penances and meditation.

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall

<suressvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker  
<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi  
<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>,  
Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd  
<vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi  
<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi  
<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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**Find below our Reply (in red) to Gaura Kesava Prabhu's argument that there are many many female devotee diksa-gurus in Gaudiya Sampradaya.**

**Your servant,  
damodara das**

[A Reply to](#)

**[There are Many Female Diksa-gurus in Gaudiya Line  
\(Gaura Kesava Prabhu in Black | Damodara Das in Red\)](#)**

Your IRATE Indian mata ji should mind her own business and not insult Gaudiya Vaisnava history of Vaisnavi Diksha gurus:

Here is the diksha parampara of Bhaktivinoda Thakura:

1. Jahnava Thakurani (female)
2. Ramachandra Goswami (male)
3. Rajaballabha Goswami (male)
4. Keshavachandra Goswami (male)
5. Rudresvara Goswami (male)
6. Dayarama Goswami (male)
7. Mahesvari Goswamini (female)
8. Guna Manjari Goswamini (female)
9. Ramamani Goswamini (female)
10. Jogesvara Goswami (male)
11. Vipina Bihari Goswami (male)
12. Bhaktivinoda Thakura (male)

Four out of his 11 spiritual diksha ancestor gurus were women.

When this is pointed out of Anti-VDG malcontents they say that the diksha mantras he received from that parampara are dead mantras as women can't transmit mantras. LOL! I actually had a long email debate with the Anti-VDGs in which the subject line written by them was "Bhaktivinodas diksha mantras are dead mantras" LOL! What an aparadha!

If someone answers that they do not accept this parampara but only the siksha parampara, it has to be pointed out that the issue here is not siksha but giving diksha mantras. Everyone accepts women can be siksha gurus. The objection is for them being diksha mantra gurus. Above it is seen clearly that Bhaktivinoda didn't see any problem with it, he accepted it.

And this parampara is not the only Gaudiya parampara which includes VDGs. There are many. Because since the early 16th century right at the beginning of Gaudiya Sampradaya VDGs have been accepted.

Gaura Kesava Prabhu wants us to believe that Srila Prabhupada was mistaken to say that women diksa-gurus in Gaudiya line are "not so many," and "in very special case," "generally they do not become." One of the Gaudiya lines Gaura Kesava Prabhu indicates by "there are many," has 9 female diksa-gurus compared to 2 male diksa-gurus. Sastric Advisory Committee (SAC) also put forward the same proposition in their 2013 paper.

In an interview, Śrīla Prabhupāda's godbrother B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja said that female ācāryas, dīkṣā-gurus, are "very rare." Mahārāja further added, "The number can be counted on fingers, lady ācāryas." (1981 Conversation with Śrīpāda B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja, quoted in SAC 2005). Indeed, the few examples of lady ācāryas in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism are of siddha women. Jāhnavā Devī was none other than Nityānanda Prabhu's wife, the internal potency of the Lord Himself. Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmī showed the symptoms of a liberated soul from the beginning of her life. She did not want to marry any mortal man. And later on, Lord Jagannatha Himself ordered her to initiate disciples. (from Associates of Śrī Caitanya 2.22, Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmī).

They form the exceptions mentioned in the śāstras, and in no way do they contradict the norm of non-siddha women being prohibited from becoming dīkṣā-guru. Instead, as exceptions, they support it.

To try to prove that Vaiṣṇavī dīkṣā-gurus are not rare in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is directly trying to prove the Śrīla Prabhupāda's stance on this subject is faulty. It creates the offense of considering the guru to be an ordinary man.

Nevertheless, the Śāstric Advisory Committee in its paper FDG: Prudent Questions, Sastric Answers (2013, p.12), and now Gaura Kesava Prabhu, put forward as counter-examples some Gauḍīya disciplic lineages that have female ācāryas. In one lineage, six of their twelve ācāryas were women, and in other, nine out of eleven were women. According to the SAC, "it is virtually impossible to provide a solid proof for the claim that FDGs were rare" and they further say that "historically, the claimed rarity of FDGs in the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava sampradāya is difficult to substantiate." This reasoning is improper because it tries to contradict the words (śabda) of a liberated ācārya such as Śrīla Prabhupāda with the lower-level evidence of observation (pratyakṣa).

But even if we were to accept the argument offered by the SAC, they have provided no evidence that the ladies who came after Jāhnavā Devī and some others in the lineages they cite were also siddha. The SAC uncritically assumes they were.

But their assumption is unwarranted. By the time of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, almost the whole Gauḍīya sampradāya was lost or transformed into apasampradāyas.

Say, after the disappearance of the Gosvāmīs, about 250 years after, the things became most ridiculous. The so-called devotees... Their representatives still are continuing. They are called prākṛta-sahajiyā. Prākṛta-sahajiyā means taking things very easily. They thought that Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is just like a boy and girl's lusty affairs. And in this way they took it that sex life as religion. Even Vivekananda, he also criticized, "Vaiṣṇavism is sex religion." So the things deteriorated in such a way that... And similarly, as Advaita Prabhu was afflicted, similarly, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura... He was at that time a householder, government officer and magistrate. He felt very much: "Oh, Lord Caitanya's movement is so... People... As soon as one will see that he belongs to the Caitanya sampradāya, he'll deride, 'Oh, these are all rascals, simply taking sex pleasures. That's all.'" (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Appearance Day Lecture, 7 Feb 1969, Los Angeles.)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is therefore addressed as rūpānuga-vara or the best of the followers of Rūpa Gosvāmī. He is the one who revived the Gauḍīya sampradāya's real teachings. Thus, some doubt is warranted as to the authenticity of the Gauḍīya lineages presented by the SAC.

In absence of any evidence higher than our observation of the SAC's lists of Vaiṣṇavīs who became dīkṣā-gurus, it is best to stick to Śrīla Prabhupāda's analysis that Vaiṣṇavī dīkṣā-gurus were "not so many" and are always to be "very special cases." Those who are dissatisfied with this are invited to present their lists of Vaiṣṇavī dīkṣā-gurus in different Gauḍīya lines, along with their bona fide biographies and teachings so that everyone can really see the evidence.

Whereas mlecca born male Gaudiya Vaisnava diksha gurus is actually the new thing which we have seen ONLY since 1978.

GKD

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 6:04 PM

**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Ajita

Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmada@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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Srila Prabhupada declares with Loud Voice...

## Bharadvaja Samhita doesn't support Caste-by-birth Varnashram

It is not a fact that because one is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family he is automatically a *brāhmaṇa*. He has a better chance to become a *brāhmaṇa*, but unless he meets all the brahminical qualifications, he cannot be accepted as such. On the other hand, if the brahminical qualifications are found in the person of a *śūdra*, he should immediately be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa*. To substantiate this there are many quotations from Bhāgavatam, Mahābhārata, **Bharadvāja-saṁhitā and the pañcarātra**, as well as many other scriptures. (SB 4.31.10, Purport)

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**Damodara Dasa**

<damodara.bvks@gmail.com>

To: David Shapiro <nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

Cc: Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Ajita

Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami

<Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami

<bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti

Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen

<bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham

<carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski

<chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah

<dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya

<divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das

<Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das

<krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa

<mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

<Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das

<mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das

<mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>,

Pancaratra Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada

dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall

<suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker

<askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi

<sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>,

Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, Vrnda dd

<vrnda16@icloud.com>, janavi devi

<janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi

<ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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**Bharadvaja-samhita...**

**allows women to worship deities and take Initiation**



—A response to Gaura Kesava Prabhu's contention, by Damodara Das

In his Facebook Post (Feb 10, 2019, 03:15—Title: “The Wrong Notion that Bharadvaja Samhita is applicable to ISKCON Defeated!”) Gaura Kesava Prabhu says that Bharadvaja-samhita is caste-by-birth-based and prohibit women etc. from worshipping deities, etc. While Hari-bhakti-vilasa rejects such notions found in sastras and goes against them following “spiritual egalitarianism” and allows women etc. for these things. (for detailed point by point reply to his email, [click here](#))

This is a wrong contention. Bharadvaja samhita, Narada pancaratra, doesn't prohibit women or sudras from worshipping deities of the Lord; rather it supports them to worship the deities of the Lord. It seems that without reading Bharadvaja samhita Gaura Kesava Prabhu is giving his comments and unnecessarily misleading devotees. I would humbly ask him to present one quote from Bharadvaja-samhita to prove his point that women are prohibited from worshipping deities; if not then he should to take back his statement.

Actually all pancaratra sastras have given allowance to women, sudras and lower to worship the deities of the Lord and receive initiation into pancaratrika mantras—tāntrikeṣu ca mantreṣu dikṣāṁ yoṣitām-*api*. Similarly, Bharadvaja samhita 1.13-15 also gives them same allowance.

When Bharadvaja-samhita says that women are allowed to take dikṣā, it means they are allowed to take pañca-saṁskāras (detailed in Chapter 2 of the pariśiṣṭa of Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā). Yāga, the last of the pañca-saṁskāras, makes them eligible to worship Deities. This consideration is the same as given in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. (For more details on ISKCON's diksa procedure and Panca-samskaras goto

[https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/harinam\\_diksa\\_and\\_fdg-final.pdf](https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/harinam_diksa_and_fdg-final.pdf)

Bharadvaja samhita says—

***prāptum icchan parām siddhiṁ janaḥ sarvo 'py akiñcanaḥ |***

***śraddhayā parayā yukto hariṁ śaraṇam āśrayet ||13||***

One who desires to achieve ultimate benefit ( parā siddhi) and who is without desire for proprietorship (akiñcana) must take shelter of Lord Hari with transcendental faith.

***na jāti-bhedam na kulaṁ na liṅgam na guṇa-kriyāḥ |***

***na deśa-kālau nāvasthām yogo hy ayam apekṣate ||14||***

There is no consideration of birth, family, gender, or quality, work, etc., nor is there consideration of time, place, and circumstance in accepting this yoga process (pañcarātrika-vidhi).

***brahma-kṣatra-viśaḥ śūdrāḥ striyās cāntarajās tathā |***

***sarva eva prapadyeran sarva-dhātāram acyutam ||15||***

Anyone, whether they be brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras, women, antyajas, or anyone else, should, with full faith, take shelter of Lord Acyuta, who is the master of all living entities, through the medium of this yoga.

**THIS IS PANCHARATRIKA VIDHI, WHICH IS DIFFERENT FROM VEDIC VIDHI.**

Gaura Kesava Prabhu is trying to mix both vidhis and say that although Vedic literatures prohibit women from worshipping Lord, that instruction is not valid for initiated vaisnavis. However, one must note that pancaratrika vidhi is different from Vedic vidhi. It is not a whimsical allowance. One must follow some vidhi.

So if women, sudras, etc. are to be initiated, then the vidhi or procedure for that is to be had from pancaratras. Please NOTE: here sudras etc. are to be taken by quality and not by birth as already explained in my previous replies. Srila Prabhupada says that brahmana, etc. mentioned in Bharadvaja samhita and pancaratras are to be taken by quality—

It is not a fact that because one is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family he is automatically a *brāhmaṇa*. He has a better chance to become a *brāhmaṇa*, but unless he meets all the brahminical qualifications, he cannot be accepted as such. On the other hand, if the brahminical qualifications are found in the person of a *śūdra*, he should immediately be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa*. To substantiate this there are many quotations from Bhāgavatam, Mahābhārata, **Bharadvāja-saṁhitā and the pañcarātra**, as well as many other scriptures. (SB 4.31.10, Purport)

Feb 10, 2019 | 03:15 | Face Book Page of Gaura Kesava Prabhu

## The Wrong Notion that Bharadvaja Samhita is applicable to ISKCON Defeated!

by G. Keshava das

Analyzing the half truths told by those motivated by Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnasharam mentality.

Bharadvaja Samhita like Manu Samhita contains casteist and sexist discrimination about the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha guru which is rejected by Srila Prabhupada, ISKCON, the Vrndavan Goswamis and Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and should find no place in ISKCON today. Such bodily discrimination isn't applicable to the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava or Vaisnavi Siksha or Diksha Guru. Accepting Bharadvaja Samhita (or Manu Samhita) fully would be to establish the evil of Asura Caste-by-birth Varnashrama principles in ISKCON.

N.B. There are certainly some Vaisnavas and Vaisnava Sampradayas that strictly follow both the prescriptions of Bharadvaja and Manu Samhitas. However even those persons and sampradayas do not 100% follow the Dharma Sastras like Manu. To be clear Manu and even some Vaisnavas do not allow for sudra/mlecca-born males or any females to hear, chant, receive or give Vedic mantras like Om namo naranaya, Savitri Gayatri, Gopal mantra and even Hare Krishna Mahamantra (all from the Vedas and Upanisads i.e. Sruti). Vaisnava principles do not accept this. The Goswamis of Vrndavan have given examples of prohibitory rules for women and sudra/mlecca-born males and they say that these sastric statements do not apply to women and sudra/mlecca-born males who are initiated Gaudiya Vaisnavas. This is confirmed in the following quotes from Hari Bhakti Vilasa.

There are certainly some slokas in some Caste-by-birth Asura Varnashrama sastras that indeed say that women cannot perform certain ritual acts or chant Vaidic mantras. However those very same sastric quotes (which have been presented in part by the Anti-VDG malcontents) also like diksha or puja, say that sudra-born or mlecca-born males similarly cannot perform such ritual acts like diksha or puja or chant Vaidic mantras.

Sri Hari Bhakti Vilasa (HBV) which is the standard for Gaudiya Vaisnava sampradaya behavior (anuṣṭhāna/religious and ritual practice) also mentions this.

brāhmaṇāsyaiḥ pūjyo'ham

śucer apy aśucer api

strī-sūdrakara saṁsparśo

vajrād api suduḥ sahaḥ

praṇava uccāraṇac caiva

śalagrāma śilārcaṇāt

brahmaṇī gamanāc caiva

śūdraś caṇḍālatāmiyat

An example of a prohibitory injunction is "Whether pure or impure, ONLY (those born) Brāhmaṇas are qualified to worship Me. I feel the touch of a (person born) Śūdra or a woman to be more painful than a thunderbolt. If they utter the sacred syllable Om (Om̐kara/prāṇava), worship Śalagrāma Śilā, or have sex with a Brāhmaṇa woman, they become dog-eaters." HBV 5.454-455

The Anti-VDG malcontents say that sastric evidences like this show that no woman can hear or chant Om̐kara (something accepted in Madhva Sampradaya and also by the Vadakalai sect of Ramanuja Vaisnavas also but not the Tegalai Ramanuja sect). Naturally they therefore cannot be diksha gurus because they cannot utter Vaidic mantras or perform diksha rituals. The Anti-VDG malcontents thus say that "if it is stated so in sastra it must apply to women in ISKCON today also, sastra is sastra they say". They hypocritically do not accept the other half of the slokas which say that sudra or mlecca-born males also have the same low status and also can never hear or chant Vaidic mantras or thus perform diksha rituals. They say that on sastric proofs like this no woman can do any of these things and that anyone who think that women can do these things must be a modern western feminist.

However Gopal Bhatta and Sanatana Goswamis who complied and commented on the Hari Bhakti Vilasa on the order of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu to establish standards for all Gaudiya Vaisnavas disagree with the Anti-VDG malcontents. The

prohibitory slokas quoted above are given by the Goswamis as an example of sastric statements that are wrongly applied to initiated Gaudiya Vaisnava women and/or males born in sudra (or mlecca) families.

This is a wrong contention. Bharadvaja samhita, Narada pancaratra, doesn't at all prohibit women or sudras from worshipping deities of the Lord; rather it supports them to worship the deities of the Lord. Without reading Bharadvaja samhita Gaura Kesava Prabhu is giving his comments and unnecessarily misleading devotees. All the pancaratra sastras have given allowance to women, sudras and lower to worship the deities of the Lord and receive initiation into pancaratrika mantras.

When Bharadvaja-samhita says that women are allowed to take dīkṣā, it means they are allowed to take pañca-saṁskāras (detailed in Chapter 2 of the pariśiṣṭa of Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā). Yāga, the last of the pañca-saṁskāras, makes them eligible to worship Deities. This consideration is the same as given in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. (For more details on ISKCON's diksa procedure and Panca-samskaras goto

[https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/harinam\\_diksa\\_and\\_fdg-final.pdf](https://siddhanta.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/harinam_diksa_and_fdg-final.pdf))

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**THIS IS PANCHARATRIKA VIDHI, WHICH IS DIFFERENT FROM VEDIC VIDHI.**

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So if women, sudras, etc. are to be initiated, then the vidhi or procedure for that is to be had from pancaratras. Please NOTE: here sudras etc. are to be taken by quality and not by birth as already explained in my previous replies. Srila Prabhupada says that brahmana, etc. mentioned in Bharadvaja samhita and pancaratras are to be taken by quality—

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Here are the previous slokas of the section so that we can know the real purport of the Goswamis on these issues in context:

evaṁ śrī bhagavān sarvaḥ

śālagrāma śilātmakaḥ

dvijaiḥ strībhiś ca śūdraiś ca

pūjyo bhagavataḥ paraiḥ

“Therefore everyone, whether (born) dvija, woman or śūdra, should engage in worshiping the Supreme Lord in His form as the śālagrāma śilā, after being duly initiated.” HBV 5.450

tathā skānde śrī brahma nārada saṁvāde cāturmāsya vrata śālagrāma śilārca prasaṅge

In the conversation between Lord Brahmā and Nārada Muni regarding the worship of śālagrāma śilā in the connection with the caturmasya vow that is found in Skanda Purāṇa, it is stated:

brahmaṇa kṣatriya viśāṁ sat

śudrāṇām athāpi vā

śālagrāme'dhikāro'sti

na cānyeṣāṁ kadācana

"Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, and vaiśyas are qualified to worship the śālagrāma śilā. If a śudra is a devotee of Lord Hari then he is also qualified. Otherwise, he is not. (A brāhmaṇa who is not a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu is not qualified to worship the śālagrāma śilā but the śudra who is attached to the devotional service of Lord Hari is qualified to worship the śālagrāma śilā. The word sat śudra in this verse refers to a śudra who is inclined to the devotional service of Lord Hari.) HBV 5.451

tatraivānyatra (Elsewhere in the same Purāṇa it is stated)

striyo vā yadi vā śūdrā

brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyādayaḥ

pūjayitvā śilā cakram

labhante śāśvataṁ padam

"It does not matter whether one is a woman, śudra, brāhmaṇa or kṣatriya, anyone who worships the śālagrāma śilā attains the eternal abode of the Supreme Lord." HBV 5.452

ato niṣedhakaṁ yad yad

vacanaṁ śrūyate sphuṭam

avaiṣṇava paraṁ tat tad

vijñeyaṁ tattva dirśibhiḥ

"According to those who are knowers of the truth, the statements prohibiting the worship of the śālagrāma śilā by śudras and women that are found in scriptures are applicable only to those who are not devotees of Lord Viṣṇu." HBV 5.453

This last verse is put together with an example of the sastric statements which do not apply to devotees of Lord Viṣṇu as follows:

ato niṣedhakaṁ yad yad

vacanaṁ śrūyate sphuṭam

avaiṣṇava paraṁ tat tad

vijñeyaṁ tattva dirśibhiḥ

brāhmaṇāśyaiva pūjyo'haṁ

śucer apy aśucer api

strī-sūdrakara saṁsparśo

vajrād api suduḥ sahaḥ

praṇava uccāraṇac caiva

śalagrāma śilārcanāt

brahmaṇī gamanāc caiva

śūdraś caṇḍālatāmiyat

"According to those who are knowers of the truth, the statements prohibiting the worship of the śalagrāma śilā by śudras and women that are found in scriptures are applicable only to those who are not devotees of Lord Viṣṇu." An example of a prohibitory injunction is "Whether pure or impure, ONLY (those born) Brāhmaṇas are qualified to worship Me. I feel the touch of a (person born) Śūdra or a woman to be more painful than a thunderbolt. If they utter the sacred syllable Om̐ (Omkara/prāṇava), worship Śalagrāma Śilā, or have sex with a Brāhmaṇa woman, they become dog-eaters." HBV 5.453-455

So I have quoted Hari Bhakti Vilasa above to show that while there are actual sastras that have quotes that deny women or sudra/mlecca born males from receiving, giving, hearing, or chanting Vedic mantras (like Omkara, Gayatri or even Hare Krishna mahamantra) and therefore doing deity worship or other Gaudiya Vaisnava diksha rituals, these sastric quotes are not accepted by Sanatana and Gopal Bhatta Goswamis who above express the Gaudiya Vaisnava scriptural egalitarian opinion that such quotes do not apply to initiated Gaudiya Vaisnava women or sudra/mlecca-born males.

This is a misleading statement. Gaura Kesava Prabhu says "actual sastras that have quotes that deny women or sudra/mlecca born males" but Sanatana Gosvami doesn't accept them for Gaudiya Vaisnava initiated devotees. This directly accuses Sanatana Gosvami and Gopala Bhatta Gosvami of sastra ninda. Gaura Kesava Prabhu's logic is going to establish that Gaudiya Vaisnavism is not based on sastras but whimsical cherry picking or practices from sastras and whimsical innovation. This is not in accordance with Srila Prabhupada's constant order that ISKCON is fully based on guru-sadhu-sastras.

"So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, the initiation ceremony, the marriage ceremony, the sacred thread ceremony, whatever we observe, they are strictly according to the śāstra. That is our point." (Wedding lecture, New Delhi, Nov 17, 1971)

Gaura Kesava Prabhu seems to purposefully avoid accepting that there are two vidhis in sastras—Vedic vidhi and Pancaratrika vidhi. Pancaratras are also sastras. They are not beyond the scope of bonafide vaisnava sastras as Gaura Kesava Prabhu wants us all to believe. Hari-bhakti-vilasa accepts pancaratrika vidhi and thus accepts allowances for women etc. for getting initiation. He doesn't go beyond the purview of sastras in allowing women etc. for getting tantrika mantras, performing deity worship, etc. He is not influenced by modern egalitarian ideas.

Now the same pancaratra sastras prohibit women as gender from becoming diksa-guru. Gaura Kesava Prabhu wants to accept the part of pancaratra sastras which fits with his egalitarian views while wants to reject the part of pancaratras which is against his egalitarian views. This is cherry picking, ardha-kukkutti-nyaya.

As for sudras being prohibited, we have already explained above, according to Srila Prabhupada, Bharadvaja samhita and pancaratras take varna by quality.

What I have thus proved is that these ideas are not in fact modern western feminist ideas as the Anti-VDG malcontents suggest. They are in fact the true philosophical understanding of the Gaudiya Acharyas i.e. the Goswamis as expressed in Hari Bhakti Vilasa which they were ordered to write as the standard for Gaudiya Vaisnava anusthana/ritual religious practice by Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Gaura Kesava Prabhu wants to artificially fit modern asastric egalitarianism in Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy. But in doing so he divorces them from sastras.

Please therefore do not be fooled by Anti-VDG malcontents who insist that sastric quotes prove that women and/or sudra/mlecca-born Gaudiya Vaisnavas are not qualified to receive, give, hear, or chant Vedic mantras (like Omkara, Gayatri or even Hare Krishna mahamantra) and therefore doing deity worship or other Gaudiya Vaisnava diksha rituals.

Ramanujacharya himself climbed to the top of the Temple tower and disobeying his guru taught the Vedic mantra Om namo naranayana to all and sundry, regardless of caste or gender. This is specifically against Dharma Sastra Smarta Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama rules that state that women and sudra/mlecca-born males are forbidden to hear, chant, receive or give Vedic utterances. It is only Caste-by-birth Smartas (and some orthodox Madhva and Vadakalai Sri Vaisnavas) and not most Vaisnavas that accept these Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama regulations. ISKCON and Gaudiya Sampradaya do not (neither do Tengelai Sri Vaisnava or Sattada Sri Vaisnava traditions).

False interpretations and assumptions based on half truths told by Anti-VDG malcontents quoting Bharadvaja Samhita:

[My comments in square brackets inline below]

shelter of Lord Hari with transcendental faith.”

[We agree]

“There is no consideration of birth, family, gender, or quality, work, etc., nor is there consideration of time, place, and

[We agree]

master of all living entities, through the medium of this yoga.”

[We agree. N.B. Only in the Gaudiya Math, ISKCON and the Vajrasucika Upanisad are brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas, sudras, women and antya-jas clearly defined by qualifications and not birth.

**What about Srimad Bhagatam? That means you reject Srimad Bhagavatam also. What about Srila Prabhupada’s statement—**

**It is not a fact that because one is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family he is automatically a *brāhmaṇa*. He has a better chance to become a *brāhmaṇa*, but unless he meets all the brahminical qualifications, he cannot be accepted as such. On the other hand, if the brahminical qualifications are found in the person of a *śūdra*, he should immediately be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa*. To substantiate this there are many quotations from Bhāgavatam, Mahābhārata, *Bhāradvāja-saṁhitā* and the *pañcarātra*, as well as many other scriptures. (SB 4.31.10, Purport)**

**I request you to please do your research properly before stating something.**

The word antya-ja contains the word ja which stands for janma or birth. It means literally "inferior birth" In the translation the word antya-ja is mentioned. Antya-ja in Monier Williams Sanskrit dictionary (the standard dictionary used by Srila Prabhupada and the BBT) as "of the lowest caste, a Sudra, a man of one of seven inferior tribes (a washerman, currier, mimic, Varuḍa, fisherman, Meda or attendant on women, and mountaineer or forester).

Further definition of Varuḍa is "of a low mixed caste (one of the 7 low castes called Antya-ja, whose occupation is splitting canes) and the feminine version Varuḍī is a woman of the above caste. Further the word Meda is defined as "a particular mixed caste (the son of a Vaideha and a Karavara or a Nishada female according to some, any person who lives by degrading occupations). Vaidehas are defined as "a particular mixed caste, the son of a Sudra by a Vaisya or of a Vaisya by a Brahman woman. Further a Kārāvāra is defined as "a man of a mixed and low caste (born from a Nishada father and Vaidehī mother, working in leather and hides.

So wherever we see the word Antya-ja it refers to a person of lower birth (antya or inferior, ja or janma/birth). So it does not indicate a person who is judged according to his guna and karma but by his birth. All the classes in this sloka including brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas, sudras, women, antya-jas are being defined by their birth only and not by their gunas and karmas or qualifications.

We cannot superimpose the ideas of Gaudiya Math and ISKCON that these classes are defined by their qualifications on the text of Bharadvaja Samhita. Neither do most Sri Vaisnavas accept that definition. So we cannot superimpose on Sri Vaisnavas or Madhvas or any Vaisnavas outside of Gaudiya Math and ISKCON the definition of these classes by qualification or guna and karma.

**So you are saying that the idea of varna by quality is just the idea of Srila Prabhupada and his Guru Maharaja. It is not sastric. This is what it boils down to.**



When it is said in the Bhagavad-gita that varna is by qualities not by birth, then this fact is to be applied in sastras wherever brahmana etc. is mentioned. Please come with your all arguments on this matter and I am ready to prove that in all sastras brahmanas etc. is actually by qualities not by birth.

The logic that you are putting forward is full of smarta understanding. Srila Prabhupada doesn't subscribe to it. He has quoted Manu samhita supporting activities of Brahmana etc. in his purport to SB 7.11.14 which is actually quoted by Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. You do not find anywhere mentioned in Manu samhita that brahmanas etc. are to be judged by qualities. Nonetheless Srila Prabhupada uses these instructions of Manu samhita to forward the cause of varna by qualities varnasrama system.

This is because Prabhupada doesn't "throw the baby out with the bath water." What he rejects is the point that varna be judged based on birth. He doesn't reject the idea of dividing varnasrama duties among different varnas. We have to just change the identification method—rest, the duties are the same as mentioned in Manu samhita etc.

That is not the definition given in Manu Samhita or other Dharma Sastras and is also not the definition given here in Bharadvaja Samhita as seen by the use of the word Antya-ja which contains the word ja or janma i.e birth. This will become more important in the next slokas.]

"Thus, one who is desirous of surrendering with faith, should take shelter of a guru who is always engaged in chanting the souls (hita-param), who is always pure in heart or free of sins, peaceful, and always committed to his prescribed duties

[Again the words dvija-varam here mean best of those who have taken second birth or upanayanam samskara which is ONLY offered in Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama or in Dharma Sastras to those males born in the families of brahmanas, ksatriyas and vaisyas.

It does not refer to those who have been elevated to the level of Vaisnavas by Vaisnava Mantra Diksha. Such persons may be considered by Gaudiya Math and ISKCON as exactly equal to those born in Brahmana families but outside of Gaudiya Math and ISKCON this is considered as a theoretical equivalence and not a practical one.

Being elevated by Vaisnava initiation does not entitle any woman or sudra or antya-ja male from taking upanayanam or savitri gayatri initiation according to these verses. So this idea should not be superimposed on the sastra Bharadvaja Samhita.

Gaura Kesava Prabhu is superimposing his caste-by-birth smarta ideas on Bharadvaja-samhita. Srila Prabhupada says —

It is not a fact that because one is born in a *brāhmaṇa* family he is automatically a *brāhmaṇa*. He has a better chance to become a *brāhmaṇa*, but unless he meets all the brahminical qualifications, he cannot be accepted as such. On the other hand, if the brahminical qualifications are found in the person of a *sūdra*, he should immediately be accepted as a *brāhmaṇa*. To substantiate this there are many quotations from Bhāgavatam, Mahābhārata, **Bharadvāja-samhitā** and the **pañcarātrā**, as well as many other scriptures. (SB 4.31.10, Purport)

This verse clearly means that ONLY those who are actual born dvijas i.e. males born in brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya families and having their second birth by upanayanam or gayatri initiation may be a guru.

Conversely it also means that this verse not only excludes women but also males born in sudra or antya-ja families from being gurus. Please ask any Sri Vaisnava if this is the understanding. However the translators seem to conveniently forget that in explaining that women cannot be gurus the Bharadvaja Samhita also bans males born in sudra or antyaj families also.]

traceable up to seven generations."

[Here this sloka explains that the best guru is born in a pure family. This is quite in context of the above sloka being about the qualification of a guru as being a male born in a higher class family i.e. brahmana, ksatriya or vaisya.]

knowledge and renunciation, is engaged in his prescribed duties (sva-karma), and is steeped in loving devotion to the Lord.”

[We agree. A divja as defined in the above slokas as a male born in the families Brahmana, Ksatriya or Vaisya, has some non-Vaisnavas in his family or has not taken birth in a family of pure Vaisnavas i.e. only of ordinary brahmanas, ksatriyas or vaisyas. Still he can be a guru. This sloka in context here does not mean that a male who is not a dvija by birth can be a guru.]

a higher birth or age.”

[Two points are made in this sloka. First even if one is born in a great family line and is a male dvija, if he does not have jnana, bhakti, good qualities, etc. he cannot be guru. Thus he needs to be born male in a dvija family AND ALSO he needs jnana, bhakti, and good qualities. It does not say that he can substitute jnana, bhakti and good qualities for being born a male in a dvija family.

Secondly amongst male dvijas, those males born in the families of brahmanas, ksatriyas and vaisyas, should not initiate persons older than themselves nor those born in a higher class than themselves.]

material desires.”

[This is completely contradicted by Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhus statement in Caitanya Caritamrta Madhya Lila 8.128:

kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya

yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya

“Whether one is a brāhmaṇa, a sannyāsī or a śūdra—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa.”

Therefore for Gaudiya Sampradaya and ISKCON this order of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the teachings of Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis (as quoted above) supercede the caste-by-birth rules of Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama as mentioned in Bharadvaja Samhita and Manu Samhita. (Some other Vaisnavas and Sampradayas may wish not to follow Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis and to follow Bharadvaja Samhita and Manu Samhita more strictly but clearly Gaudiya Vaisnavas and specifically ISKCON can not.)]

[We disagree. We accept the teachings of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis on this matter that supercede the caste-by-birth Asura Varnasharama rules presented in Bharadvaja Samhita and Manu Samhita. For details see above.]

[Every person who knows the science of Lord Krsna, yei krsna tattva vetta sei guru hoy, knows that Lord Krsna appears in His non-different deity form in the temple and homes of all Vaisnava Sampradayas. Anyone with this knowledge can and does see the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His Arca Avatar form "face to face" each time they have darshan of the deities in these places. The idea given in this sloka is that someone should understand the Vaisnava philosophical doctrines fully which is exactly the same as Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis insistence on a person being yei krsna tattva vetta sei guru hoy. Thus we agree that a person who knows such transcendental knowledge thus sees the deity in the temple as non-different from God Himself. This is in contrast to someone who sees the deity in the temple simply as a statue or ordinary stone. Those who think otherwise have a hellish mentality.

arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhir

viṣṇor vā vaiṣṇavānām kali-mala-mathane pāda-tīrthe 'mbu-buddhiḥ

śrī-viṣṇor nāmni mantre sakala-kaluṣa-he śabda-sāmānya-buddhir

viṣṇau sarveśvareṣe tad-itara-sama-dhīr yasya vā nārakī saḥ

If one thinks that the worshipable śālagrāma-śilā is a mere stone, that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being or that a pure Vaiṣṇava preaching the bhakti cult all over the world is a member of a particular caste or material division of society, he is considered a nārakī, a candidate for hellish life. CC Antya 6.294 (Quoted from Padma Purāṇa)

N.B. Nara-matir means literally "[ordinary] person-mentality" if we consider a Vaisnava or Vaisnavi guru or teacher to be an ordinary human being that is a hellish mentality and Jāti-buddhir means literally "birth-mentality" if we consider an aspect of a Vaisnavas or Vaisnavis material birth to be a disqualification, it is a hellish mentality. Females are also a material division of society.

The malcontents against VDGs (Vaisnavi Diksha Gurus) say that the above does not apply to those born female, it only applies to those born male. Thus they consider the qualification for being a Vaisnava Mantra Diksha guru to be dependent on a customary or social convention i.e. that only dvija born males can be diksha gurus.

Srila Prabhupada did not teach or agree to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those certain sastras which deal with hereditary, customary social or ecclesiastical conventions, as a basis for the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha Guru.

Srila Prabhupada did not accept that the qualification to be guru is based on customary hereditary, ecclesiastic or social considerations. He tells us this clearly in the section defining Guru Tattva in Caitanya Caritamṛta (the first chapter of Adi Lila teaches Gaudiya Vaisnava Guru Tattva):

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding. CC Adi 1.35 purport

Accepting a guru ONLY from a group of hereditary lines of dvija born male gurus is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from a customary social group i.e. only (dvija) males is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from an ecclesiastically approved group i.e. approved by a Church system (ecclesiastical convention means Church rules or GBC resolutions) is wrong as per this statement.

One may accept a guru from one of the above groups, but one must not think that only those who are hereditary gurus, male gurus or Church approved gurus are the ONLY spiritually qualified persons to be guru. If one does then as stated above in the Padma Purana, he has a hellish mentality. This evil hellish mentality must not be allowed to enter ISKCON.]

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 7:59 PM



**[Vrnda dd](#)**

<vrnda16@icloud.com>

To: Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>

Cc: suresvara@gmail.com, nrsimhananda@gmail.com, Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net, Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com, Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, ajitacozzi@gmail.com, askindredspirits@gmail.com, bbks108@gmail.com, bobcohen@ivs.edu, brss108@gmail.com, carlwoodham@gmail.com, chandraswami108@hotmail.com, damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com, dhruva.k.108@gmail.com, divyajps@yahoo.com, janardanagkg@gmail.com, janavidevi@hotmail.com, krishnakirti@gmail.com, krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com, mahatmadasa@gmail.com, mpd.vda@gmail.com, narahari@naraharidas.com, pancaratnadas@gmail.com, pdb108@yahoo.com, ruciradasi@gmail.com, sati.bts@gmail.com, siddha\_007@163.com, sriradhita@gmail.com

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Hare Krishna, Mahatma prabhu! Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

I also applaud your comments. One thing we know for sure about Krishna is that He really likes varigatedness and diversity! No two snowflakes...no two sets of fingerprints...no two sets of DNA...

I am responding to your interest in historical precedents. I am aware of several historical instances that we could profitably discuss at length at some point, but at this moment i will try to summarize (at the risk of oversimplification).

In any difference of opinion, there is usually one polarity that can be considered more liberal and one that can be considered more conservative.

Usually the side that is more liberal is fine with co-existing with those who are more conservative.

Often the side that is more conservative has more difficulty accepting those who are more liberal.

If the top of the hierarchy goes with the more conservative position, the liberal elements are faced with

- 1) having to leave because of being excommunicated,
- 2) choosing to leave to find like-minded association/fellowship, or
- 3) staying although uncomfortable.

Often both groups will claim to be the 'True' group. Rarely is property an issue, since the liberal group is 'newer' and can't make a strong claim.

If the top of the hierarchy goes with the more liberal position (a less likely outcome, but it has happened), the conservative elements are rarely in danger of being excommunicated, since the liberality of the liberal position is fine with including the conservative point of view as valid. However, the conservative members frequently choose to leave, often as a group, in order

to remain with like-minded fellowship. They don't tend stay, having made up their minds that the more liberal position is wrong/sinful/against scripture. They frequently and effectively claim to be the 'True' believers/followers and likely make an effort to claim the physical assets.

Obviously this is just the beginning of a discussion that not all will be interested in. Please forgive the oversimplifications.

All glories to Lord Varahadev! May He lift us out of these tumultuous waters as well!

your humble servant

Vrnda dd

On Feb 15, 2019, at 08:52 PM, Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

thank you.

i think we will need to show what has happened and what will happen if we don't know how to respectfully serve with our brothers and sisters that we don't agree with. I am sure there are historical precedents we can refer to that might help us predict likely scenarios that will face Iskcon if we are unable to embrace unity in diversity well. Perhaps some of you are already aware of details of religious history that we could learn from, i.e. that resembles what we are going through.

In a message dated 2/16/2019 10:13:43 AM India Standard Time, [suresvara@gmail.com](mailto:suresvara@gmail.com) writes:

Since finding unity amidst our often dizzying diversity is the key to unlocking the cooperation we'll need to please Srila Prabhupada and take KC to every town and village, if I can help you, Mahatma Prabhu, I'm at your service.

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 9:33 PM



**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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All generalizations are false...including this one. :) Best not to do it.

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 10:30 PM

**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>  
Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>, Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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I've invited Gaura Keshava to give a response to Damodara pr's comprehensive rebuttal. I want to thank all of the pundits for digging deep in helping the Sabha understand the essential issues re VDG/FDG. I am reading every word. Feels like we are heading to a climax in a film e.g. Twelve Angry Men. I don't think anyone has done as rigorous a research as is being done by the Sabha - thanks to our scholarly guests.

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Sat, Feb 16, 2019 at 11:01 PM

**Damodara Dasa**

&lt;damodara.bvks@gmail.com&gt;

To: David Shapiro &lt;nrsimhananda@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Vrnda dd &lt;vrnda16@icloud.com&gt;, Ajita Cozzi

&lt;ajitacozzi@gmail.com&gt;, Atmanivedana Swami

&lt;Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net&gt;, BB Keshava Swami

&lt;bbks108@gmail.com&gt;, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara

Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" &lt;BDDS.BTS@pamho.net&gt;, Bhakti

Anugraha Janardana Swami &lt;janardanagkg@gmail.com&gt;,

Bhakti Rasayana Sagar &lt;brss108@gmail.com&gt;, Bob Cohen

&lt;bobcohen@ivs.edu&gt;, Carl Woodham

&lt;carlwoodham@gmail.com&gt;, Chris Ostrowski

&lt;chandraswami108@hotmail.com&gt;, Dhruva Kusa Shah

&lt;dhruva.k.108@gmail.com&gt;, Divya Priya

&lt;divyajps@yahoo.com&gt;, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los

Angeles - USA)" &lt;Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net&gt;, Kratu Das

&lt;Kratudas108@yahoo.com&gt;, Krishna Kirti Das

&lt;krishnakirti@gmail.com&gt;, Krishnarupa Dasi

&lt;krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com&gt;, Madhuri Pura Dasa

&lt;mpd.vda@gmail.com&gt;, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP"

&lt;Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net&gt;, Mahatma Das

&lt;mahatmadasa@gmail.com&gt;, Mahatma Das

&lt;mahat@aol.com&gt;, Narahari &lt;narahari@naraharidas.com&gt;,

Pancaratra Dasa &lt;pancaratnadas@gmail.com&gt;, "Prabhupada

dasa b." &lt;pdb108@yahoo.com&gt;, Richard Hall

&lt;suresvara@gmail.com&gt;, Rukmini Walker

&lt;askindredspirits@gmail.com&gt;, Sati devi dasi

&lt;sati.bts@gmail.com&gt;, Sri Oppecini &lt;sriradhita@gmail.com&gt;,

Visakha Dasi &lt;dasivisakha@gmail.com&gt;, janavi devi

&lt;janavidevi@hotmail.com&gt;, rucira dasi

&lt;ruciradasi@gmail.com&gt;, 徐达斯 &lt;siddha\_007@163.com&gt;

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I've invited Gaura Keshava to give a response to Damodara pr's comprehensive rebuttal. I want to thank all of the pundits for digging deep in helping the Sabha understand the essential issues re VDG/FDG. I am reading every word. Feels like we are heading to a

climax in a film e.g. Twelve Angry Men.

A joke.

Yes. Incidentally, mahajananas are also 12 (not 10 as if you take out Manu and Narada).

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Sun, Feb 17, 2019 at 11:23 AM



**David Shapiro**

<nrsimhananda@gmail.com>

To: Vrnda dd <vrnda16@icloud.com>

Cc: Ajita Cozzi <ajitacozzi@gmail.com>, Atmanivedana Swami <Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net>, BB Keshava Swami <bbks108@gmail.com>, "BDDS (Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami) BTS (Lagos - NG)" <BDDS.BTS@pamho.net>, Bhakti Anugraha Janardana Swami <janardanagkg@gmail.com>, Bhakti Rasayana Sagar <brss108@gmail.com>, Bob Cohen <bobcohen@ivs.edu>, Carl Woodham <carlwoodham@gmail.com>, Chris Ostrowski <chandraswami108@hotmail.com>, Damodara Dasa <damodara.bvks@gmail.com>, Dhruva Kusa Shah <dhruva.k.108@gmail.com>, Divya Priya <divyajps@yahoo.com>, "Drutakarma (das) ACBSP (Los Angeles - USA)" <Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net>, Kratu Das <Kratudas108@yahoo.com>, Krishna Kirti Das <krishnakirti@gmail.com>, Krishnarupa Dasi <krishnarupa.acbsp@gmail.com>, Madhuri Pura Dasa <mpd.vda@gmail.com>, "Mahaman (das) ACBSP" <Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net>, Mahatma Das <mahatmadasa@gmail.com>, Mahatma Das <mahat@aol.com>, Narahari <narahari@naraharidas.com>, Pancaratna Dasa <pancaratnadas@gmail.com>, "Prabhupada dasa b." <pdb108@yahoo.com>, Richard Hall <suresvara@gmail.com>, Rukmini Walker <askindredspirits@gmail.com>, Sati devi dasi <sati.bts@gmail.com>, Sri Oppecini <sriradhita@gmail.com>,

Visakha Dasi <dasivisakha@gmail.com>, janavi devi <janavidevi@hotmail.com>, rucira dasi <ruciradasi@gmail.com>, 徐达斯 <siddha\_007@163.com>

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Gaura Keshava's response. (Be prepared; it's a little edgy and long)

Just a personal note: Human nature is to get irritated, annoyed, impatient, etc at times. We all know the feelings. There is some of that here, but it is minimal. Let's overlook the emotional components and concentrate on the substance. There is nothing horrible in communicating passionate feelings within limits of propriety. Please give some wiggle room to each other in that regard. I think that we all understand that everyone is trying to be of sincere service.

1. Already defeated them. No need for more.
2. These fanatics will never be satisfied.
3. I attach my comments showing that the same standard for diksha guru for both Vaisnavis and sudra/mleeca born male Vaisnavas is there in Bharadvaja Samhita. Bharadvaja Samhita doesn't give us any more information about who can be diksha guru than Lord Caitanya in CC Mad 8.128.

Both sastras say if a person is siddha, or as Bharadvaja Samhita puts it "see God face to face" or as Srila Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya say "yei krsna tattva vetta sei guru hoy" Know the science of Lord Krishna, no matter what caste, birth, or gender they have they can be a Vaisnava mantra diksha guru.

4. They write a lot, but it is all a SMOKESCREEN full of STRAWMAN arguments.
5. Both sides are talking past each other. The opponents actually do not know their own argument properly and thus are not qualified to debate. If they prove Vaisnavis cannot be diksha gurus without being siddha, then the same is true for sudra/mleeca born male Vaisnavas too. Thus they are defeated because in ISKCON it is accepted sudra/mleeca born male Vaisnavas can be diksha gurus and the GBC has clearly stated that they need not be accepted as siddha. Srila Prabhupada says in NOI that a madhyama or even a kanistha adhikari can also have disciples. So madhyama and even kanistha adhikari males and females in ISKCON can also have disciples. Very very clear.



No need for Bharadvaja Samhita, though it also proves that males and females have the same standard for being diksha guru. Yei krsna tattva vetta sei guru hoy from Lord Caitanya is enough.

6. Krishnakirti already accepted (when replying to Visakha dasis CC quote in previous email) that the standard for Vaisnavis and sudra/mleeca born males is exactly the same i.e. they have to be siddha, or as Bharadvaja Samhita puts is “see God face to face” or as Srila Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya say “yei krsna tattva vetta sei guru hoy” Know the science of Lord Krishna.

SO IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO THIS:

Please ask the opponents to show in Bharadvaja Samhita OR any sastra where the qualifications to be mantra diksha guru is different for males than for females????

WHAT WE AGREE ON:

1. We all agree that Vaisnavis and Vaisnavas (female and male Vaisnavas) can both be diksha gurus if they are qualified. The qualification being:

They have to be siddha, or as Bharadvaja Samhita puts is “see God face to face” or as Srila Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya say “yei krsna tattva vetta sei guru hoy” Know the science of Lord Krishna.

We agree on that.

2. The Disagreement is that the standard to be appointed a diksha guru in ISKCON today should allow sudra/mlecca born males to become diksha guru with less spiritual qualification than Vaisnavis.

Please ask the opponents to show conclusively that in Bharadvaja Samhita (which lumps women and antya-ja sudra/mlecca born males into one group) distinguishes between these two types of person by saying that:

1. Vaisnavis (i.e. women Vaisnavas) have to be siddha, see God face to face, etc. to be accepted as diksha gurus.

BUT



2. Vaisnavas (i.e. sudra/mlecca born males) DO NOT have to be siddha or see God face to face, etc. to be accepted as diksha gurus.

The fact is that they never ask the people they interview to comment on the that question.

They never ask if sudra/mlecca born males can be diksha gurus if they are less spiritually qualified than the siddha or seeing God face to face standard they propose for Vaisnavis.

All their quotes from Srila Prabhupada saying that a sudra/mlecca born male becomes a equal to a brahmin by initiation apply equally to sudra/mlecca born females as well.

This is their big mistake.

ISKCON has a standard for who can become a diksha guru. And as in all sastras it is the same for Vaisnavis and sudra/mlecca born male Vaisnavas also.

I append text as well as the PDF of my response to Bharadvaja Samhita for those who can't receive the PDF.

dasan

Gaura Keshava das

Text of attachment:

The Wrong Notion that Bharadvaja Samhita is applicable to ISKCON Defeated!

by G. Keshava das 2019.2.9

Analyzing the half truths told by those motivated by Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnasharam mentality.

Bharadvaja Samhita like Manu Samhita contains casteist and sexist discrimination about the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha guru which is rejected by Srila Prabhupada, ISKCON, the Vrndavan Goswamis and Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and should find no place in ISKCON today. Such bodily discrimination isn't applicable to the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava or Vaisnavi Siksha or Diksha Guru. Accepting Bharadvaja Samhita (or Manu Samhita) fully would be to establish the evil of Asura Caste-by-birth Varnashrama principles in ISKCON.

N.B. There are certainly some Vaisnavas and Vaisnava Sampradayas that strictly follow both the prescriptions of Bharadvaja and Manu Samhitas. However even those persons and sampradayas do not 100% follow the Dharma Sastras like Manu. To be clear Manu and even some Vaisnavas do not allow for sudra/mlecca-born males or any females to hear, chant, receive or give Vedic mantras like Om namo narayanaya, Savitri Gayatri, Gopal mantra and even Hare Krishna Mahamantra (all from the Vedas and Upanisads i.e. Sruti). Vaisnava principles do not accept this. The Goswamis of Vrndavan have given examples of prohibitory rules for women and sudra/mlecca-born males and they say that these sastric statements do not apply to women and sudra/mlecca-born males who are initiated Gaudiya Vaisnavas. This is confirmed in the following quotes from Hari Bhakti Vilasa.

There are certainly some slokas in some Caste-by-birth Asura Varnashrama sastras that indeed say that women cannot perform certain ritual acts or chant Vaidic mantras. However those very same sastric quotes (which have been presented in part by the Anti-VDG malcontents) also like diksha or puja, say that sudra-born or mlecca-born males similarly cannot perform such ritual acts like diksha or puja or chant Vaidic mantras.

Sri Hari Bhakti Vilasa (HBV) which is the standard for Gaudiya Vaisnava sampradaya behavior (anuṣṭhāna/religious and ritual practice) also mentions this.

brāhmaṅśyaiva pūjyo'haṁ  
śucer apy aśucer api  
strī-sūdrakara saṁsparśo  
vajrād api suduḥ sahaḥ

praṇava uccāraṇac caiva  
śalagrāma śilārcanāt  
brahmaṅī gamanāc caiva  
śūdraś caṇḍālatāmiyat

An example of a prohibitory injunction is "Whether pure or impure, ONLY (those born) Brāhmaṅas are qualified to worship Me. I feel the touch of a (person born) Śūdra or a woman to be more painful than a thunderbolt. If they utter the sacred syllable Om (Om̐kara/prāṇava), worship Śalagrāma Śilā, or have sex with a Brāhmaṅa woman, they become dog-eaters." HBV 5.454-455

The Anti-VDG malcontents say that sastric evidences like this show that no woman can hear or chant Om̐kara (something accepted in Madhva Sampradaya and also by the Vadakalai sect of Ramanuja Vaisnavas also but not the Tengalai Ramanuja sect). Naturally they therefore cannot be diksha gurus because they cannot utter Vaidic mantras or perform diksha rituals. The Anti-VDG malcontents thus say that "if it is stated so in sastra it must apply to women in ISKCON today also, sastra is sastra they say". They hypocritically do not accept the other half of the slokas which say that sudra or mlecca-born males also have the same low status and also can never hear or chant Vaidic mantras or thus perform diksha rituals. They say that on sastric proofs like this no woman can do any of these things and that anyone who think that women can do these things must be a modern western feminist.

However Gopal Bhatta and Sanatana Goswamis who complied and commented on the Hari Bhakti Vilasa on the order of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu to establish standards for all Gaudiya Vaisnavas disagree with the Anti-VDG malcontents. The prohibitory slokas quoted above are given by the Goswamis as an example of sastric statements that are wrongly applied to initiated Gaudiya Vaisnava women and/or males born in sudra (or mlecca) families.

[- Show quoted text -](#)

What I have thus proved is that these ideas are not in fact modern western feminist ideas as the Anti-VDG malcontents suggest. They are in fact the true philosophical understanding of the Gaudiya Acharyas i.e. the Goswamis as expressed in Hari Bhakti Vilasa which they were ordered to write as the standard for Gaudiya Vaisnava anusthana/ritual religious practice by Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Please therefore do not be fooled by Anti-VDG malcontents who insist that sastric quotes prove that women and/or sudra/mlecca-born Gaudiya Vaisnavas are not qualified to receive, give, hear, or chant Vedic mantras (like Om̐kara, Gayatri or even Hare Krishna mahamantra) and therefore doing deity worship or other Gaudiya Vaisnava diksha rituals.

Ramanujacharya himself climbed to the top of the Temple tower and disobeying his guru taught the Vedic mantra Om namo naranayaya to all and sundry, regardless of caste or gender. This is specifically against Dharma Sastra Smarta Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama rules that state that women and sudra/mlecca-born males are forbidden to hear, chant, receive or give Vedic utterances. It is only Caste-by-birth Smartas (and some orthodox Madhva and Vadakalai Sri Vaisnavas) and not most Vaisnavas that accept these Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama regulations. ISKCON and Gaudiya Sampradaya do not (neither do Tengalai Sri Vaisnava or Sattada Sri Vaisnava traditions).

False interpretations and assumptions based on half truths told by Anti-VDG malcontents quoting Bharadvaja Samhita:

[My comments in square brackets inline below]

These verses are presented in serial order, as presented in the saṁhitā.

prāptum icchan parāṁ siddhirṁ janaḥ sarvo 'py akiṅcanaḥ | śraddhayā parayā yukto hariṁ śaraṇam āśrayet ||13||

"One who desires to achieve ultimate benefit (parā siddhi) and who is without desire for proprietorship (akiṅcana) must take shelter of Lord Hari with transcendental faith."

[We agree]

na jāti-bhedam na kularṁ na liṅgam na guṇa-kriyāḥ | na deśa-kālau nāvasthām yogo hy ayam apekṣate ||14||

"There is no consideration of birth, family, gender, or quality, work, etc., nor is there consideration of time, place, and circumstance in accepting this yoga process (pāñcarātrikī vidhi)."

[We agree]

brahma-kṣatra-viśaḥ śūdrāḥ striyāś cāntarajās tathā | sarva eva prapadyeran sarva-dhātāram acyutam ||15||

"Anyone, whether they be brāhmaṅas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras, women, antyajas, or anyone else, should, with full faith, take shelter of Lord Acyuta, who is the master of all living entities, through the medium of this yoga."

[We agree. N.B. Only in the Gaudiya Math, ISKCON and the Vajrasucika Upanisad are brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas, sudras, women and antya-jas clearly defined by qualifications and not birth.

The word antya-ja contains the word ja which stands for janma or birth. It means literally "inferior birth" In the translation the word antya-ja is mentioned. Antya-ja in Monier Williams Sanskrit dictionary (the standard dictionary used by Srila Prabhupada and the BBT) as "of the lowest caste, a Sudra, a man of one of seven inferior tribes (a washerman, currier, mimic, Varuḍa, fisherman, Meda or attendant on women, and mountaineer or forester).

Further definition of Varuḍa is "of a low mixed caste (one of the 7 low castes called Antya-ja, whose occupation is splitting canes) and the

feminine version Varuḍī is a woman of the above caste. Further the word Meda is defined as "a particular mixed caste (the son of a Vaideha and a Karavara or a Nishada female according to some, any person who lives by degrading occupations). Vaidehas are defined as "a particular mixed caste, the son of a Sudra by a Vaisya or of a Vaisya by a Brahman woman. Further a Kārāvāra is defined as "a man of a mixed and low caste (born from a Nishada father and Vaidehī mother, working in leather and hides.

So wherever we see the word Antya-ja it refers to a person of lower birth (antya or inferior, ja or janma/birth). So it does not indicate a person who is judged according to his guna and karma but by his birth. All the classes in this sloka including brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas, sudras, women, antya-jas are being defined by their birth only and not by their gunas and karmas or qualifications.

We cannot superimpose the ideas of Gaudiya Math and ISKCON that these classes are defined by their qualifications on the text of Bharadvaja Samhita. Neither do most Sri Vaisnavas accept that definition. So we cannot superimpose on Sri Vaisnavas or Madhvas or any Vaisnavas outside of Gaudiya Math and ISKCON the definition of these classes by qualification or guna and karma.

That is not the definition given in Manu Samhita or other Dharma Sastras and is also not the definition given here in Bharadvaja Samhita as seen by the use of the word Antya-ja which contains the word ja or janma i.e birth. This will become more important in the next slokas.]

prapitsur mantra-nirataṁ prājñāṁ hita-param śucim | praśāntaṁ niyataṁ vṛttau bhajed dvija-varaṁ gurum ||38||

"Thus, one who is desirous of surrendering with faith, should take shelter of a guru who is always engaged in chanting the mantra and is a knower of bhakti-siddhānta (prājñāṁ), is always engaged, without any desire for personal benefit, in showering mercy on fallen souls (hita-param), who is always pure in heart or free of sins, peaceful, and always committed to his prescribed duties (ordained by his guru or by varṇāśrama). Such a guru should be the best of the twice-born (dvija-varaṁ meaning brāhmaṇa)."

[Again the words dvija-varaṁ here mean best of those who have taken second birth or upanayanam samskara which is ONLY offered in Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama or in Dharma Sastras to those males born in the families of brahmanas, ksatriyas and vaisyas.

It does not refer to those who have been elevated to the level of Vaisnavas by Vaisnava Mantra Diksha. Such persons may be considered by Gaudiya Math and ISKCON as exactly equal to those born in Brahmana families but outside of Gaudiya Math and ISKCON this is considered as a theoretical equivalence and not a practical one.

Being elevated by Vaisnava initiation does not entitle any woman or sudra or antya-ja male from taking upanayanam or savitri gayatri initiation according to these verses. So this idea should not be superimposed on the sastra Bharadvaja Samhita.

This verse clearly means that ONLY those who are actual born dvijas i.e. males born in brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya families and having their second birth by upanayanam or gayatri initiation may be a guru.

Conversely it also means that this verse not only excludes women but also males born in sudra or antya-ja families from being gurus. Please ask any Sri Vaisnava if this is the understanding. However the translators seem to conveniently forget that in explaining that women cannot be gurus the Bharadvaja Samhita also bans males born in sudra or antyaj families also.]

sapta-pūruṣa-vijñeeye santataikānti-nirmale |  
kule jāto guṇair yukto vipro śreṣṭhatamo guruḥ ||39||

"The best guru of all is a learned brāhmaṇa endowed with good qualities who has taken birth in a sinless lineage of devotee ancestors, traceable up to seven generations."

[Here this sloka explains that the best guru is born in a pure family. This is quite in context of the above sloka being about the qualification of a guru as being a male born in a higher class family i.e. brahmana, ksatriya or vaisya.]

svayaṁ vā bhakti-sampanno jñāna-vairāgya-bhūṣitaḥ | sva-karma-nirato nityam arhaty ācāryatām dvijaḥ ||40||

"Even if a twice-born brāhmaṇa (dvija) happens to have some non-devotees in his family line, or has not been fortunate to take birth in a renowned family of pure devotees, he nevertheless always deserves to be an ācārya if he is endowed with all good qualities like knowledge and renunciation, is engaged in his prescribed duties (sva-karma), and is steeped in loving devotion to the Lord."

[We agree. A divja as defined in the above slokas as a male born in the families Brahmana, Ksatriya or Vaisya, has some non-Vaisnavas in his family or has not taken birth in a family of pure Vaisnavas i.e. only of ordinary brahmanas, ksatriyas or vaisyas. Still he can be a guru. This sloka in context here does not mean that a male who is not a dvija by birth can be a guru.]

nācāryaḥ kula-jāto 'pi jñāna-bhakty-ādi-varjitaḥ | na ca hīna-vayo-jātiḥ prakṛṣṭānām anāpadi ||41||

"On the other hand, one cannot become an ācārya even if one is born in a great family line (as mentioned before) but is devoid of jñāna, bhakti, good qualities, etc. Also, unless there is an emergency, an ācārya from a lower birth or age should not initiate a person from a higher birth or age."

[Two points are made in this sloka. First even if one is born in a great family line and is a male dvija, if he does not have jnana, bhakti, good qualities, etc. he cannot be guru. Thus he needs to be born male in a dvija family AND ALSO he needs jnana, bhakti, and good qualities. It does not say that he can substitute jnana, bhakti and good qualities for being born a male in a dvija family.

Secondly amongst male dvijas, those males born in the families of brahmanas, ksatriyas and vaisyas, should not initiate persons older than themselves nor those born in a higher class than themselves.]

na jātu mantra-dā nārī na sūdra nāntarodbhavaḥ | nābhiśasto na patitaḥ kāma-kāmo 'py akāminah ||42||

"Even then, a woman, a sūdra and an antyaja can never act as initiating gurus, nor can anyone who is accused of a great sin or is fallen. And an aspiring disciple who is already accomplished in detachment (akāmī) should never accept a guru who is infected with material desires."

[This is completely contradicted by Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhus statement in Caitanya Caritamṛta Madhya Lila 8.128:

kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, sūdra kene naya  
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya

"Whether one is a brāhmaṇa, a sannyāsī or a sūdra—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of

Kṛṣṇa.”

Therefore for Gaudiya Sampradaya and ISKCON this order of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the teachings of Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis (as quoted above) supercede the caste-by-birth rules of Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama as mentioned in Bharadvaja Samhita and Manu Samhita. (Some other Vaisnavas and Sampradayas may wish not to follow Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis and to follow Bharadvaja Samhita and Manu Samhita more strictly but clearly Gaudiya Vaisnavas and specifically ISKCON can not.)]

striyaḥ śūdrādayaś caiva bodhayeyur hitāhitam | yathārhaṁ mānanīyāś ca nārhanty ācāryatām kvacit ||43||

“Women, śūdras, etc., can give ethical and moral instructions and are also worthy of respect as per their qualifications and conditions but are not entitled to get the position of ācārya.”

[We disagree. We accept the teachings of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis on this matter that supercede the caste-by-birth Asura Varnashrama rules presented in Bharadvaja Samhita and Manu Samhita. For details see above.]

kim apy atrābhijāyante yoginaḥ sarva-yoniṣu | pratyakṣitātma-nāthānām naiśāṁ cintyaṁ kulādikam ||44||

“But, because perfect yogis (or nitya-siddha devotees) who are on the stage of yoga-pratyakṣa (i.e. are self-realized – seeing God face-to-face), pratyakṣitātma-nāthānām, may take birth in any family tradition, in such cases no consideration of kula, gender, etc. as mentioned earlier apply (they can become ācāryas).”

[Every person who knows the science of Lord Kṛṣṇa, yei kṛṣṇa tattva vetta sei guru hoy, knows that Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in His non-different deity form in the temple and homes of all Vaisnava Sampradayas. Anyone with this knowledge can and does see the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His Arca Avatar form "face to face" each time they have darshan of the deities in these places. The idea given in this sloka is that someone should understand the Vaisnava philosophical doctrines fully which is exactly the same as Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis insistence on a person being yei kṛṣṇa tattva vetta sei guru hoy. Thus we agree that a person who knows such transcendental knowledge thus sees the deity in the temple as non-different from God Himself. This is in contrast to someone who sees the deity in the temple simply as a statue or ordinary stone. Those who think otherwise have a hellish mentality.

arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhir  
viṣṇor vā vaiṣṇavānām kali-mala-mathane pāda-īrthe 'mbu-buddhiḥ  
śrī-viṣṇor nāmni mantrē sakala-kaluṣa-he śabda-sāmānya-buddhir  
viṣṇau sarveśvareṣe tad-itara-sama-dhīr yasya vā nārakī saḥ

If one thinks that the worshipable śālagrāma-śilā is a mere stone, that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being or that a pure Vaiṣṇava preaching the bhakti cult all over the world is a member of a particular caste or material division of society, he is considered a nārakī, a candidate for hellish life. CC Antya 6.294 (Quoted from Padma Purāṇa)

N.B. Nara-matir means literally “[ordinary] person-mentality” if we consider a Vaisnava or Vaisnavi guru or teacher to be an ordinary human being that is a hellish mentality and Jāti-buddhir means literally "birth-mentality" if we consider an aspect of a Vaisnavas or Vaisnavis material birth to be a disqualification, it is a hellish mentality. Females are also a material division of society.

The malcontents against VDGs (Vaisnavi Diksha Gurus) say that the above does not apply to those born female, it only applies to those born male. Thus they consider the qualification for being a Vaisnava Mantra Diksha guru to be dependent on a customary or social convention i.e. that only dvija born males can be diksha gurus.

Srila Prabhupada did not teach or agree to follow the caste and gender discriminatory rules given in those certain sastras which deal with hereditary, customary social or ecclesiastical conventions, as a basis for the purely spiritual position of Vaisnava Diksha Guru.

Srila Prabhupada did not accept that the qualification to be guru is based on customary hereditary, ecclesiastic or social considerations. He tells us this clearly in the section defining Guru Tattva in Caitanya Caritamṛta (the first chapter of Adi Lila teaches Gaudiya Vaisnava Guru Tattva):

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī advises that one not accept a spiritual master in terms of hereditary or customary social and ecclesiastical conventions. One should simply try to find a genuinely qualified spiritual master for actual advancement in spiritual understanding. CC Adi 1.35 purport

Accepting a guru ONLY from a group of hereditary lines of dvija born male gurus is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from a customary social group i.e. only (dvija) males is wrong as per this statement.

Accepting a guru ONLY from an ecclesiastically approved group i.e. approved by a Church system (ecclesiastical convention means Church rules or GBC resolutions) is wrong as per this statement.

One may accept a guru from one of the above groups, but one must not think that only those who are hereditary gurus, male gurus or Church approved gurus are the ONLY spiritually qualified persons to be guru. If one does then as stated above in the Padma Purana, he has a hellish mentality. This evil hellish mentality must not be allowed to enter ISKCON.]

sampradaya behavior (anusthana/religious and ritual practice) also mentions this.

brahmanasyaiva pujo'ham  
sucer apy asucer api  
stri-sudrakara samsparso  
vajrad api suduh saḥ

pranava uccaranac caiva

salagrama silarcanat  
brahmani gamanac caiva  
sudras candalatamiyat

An example of a prohibitory injunction is "Whether pure or impure, ONLY (those born) Brahmanas are qualified to worship Me. I feel the touch of a (person born) Sudra or a woman to be more painful than a thunderbolt. If they utter the sacred syllable Om (Om-kara/pranava), worship Salagrama Sila, or have sex with a Brahmana woman, they become dog-eaters." HBV 5.454-455

The Anti-VDG malcontents say that sastric evidences like this show that no woman can hear or chant Omkara (something accepted in Madhva Sampradaya and also by the Vadakalai sect of Ramanuja Vaisnavas also but not the Tengalai Ramanuja sect). Naturally they therefore cannot be diksha gurus because they cannot utter Vaidic mantras or perform diksha rituals. The Anti-VDG malcontents thus say that "if it is stated so in sastra it must apply to women in ISKCON today also, sastra is sastra they say". They hypocritically do not accept the other half of the slokas which say that sudra or mlecca-born males also have the same low status and also can never hear or chant Vaidic mantras or thus perform diksha rituals. They say that on sastric proofs like this no woman can do any of these things and that anyone who think that women can do these things must be a modern western feminist.

However Gopal Bhatta and Sanatana Goswamis who complied and commented on the Hari Bhakti Vilasa on the order of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu to establish standards for all Gaudiya Vaisnavas disagree with the Anti-VDG malcontents. The prohibitory slokas quoted above are given by the Goswamis as an example of sastric statements that are wrongly applied to initiated Gaudiya Vaisnava women and/or males born in sudra (or mlecca) families.

Here are the previous slokas of the section so that we can know the real purport of the Goswamis on these issues in context:

evam sri bhagavan sarvah  
salagrama silatmakah  
dvijaih sribhis ca sudrais ca  
pujyo bhagavatah paraih

"Therefore everyone, whether (born) dvija, woman or sudra, should engage in worshiping the Supreme Lord in His form as the salagrama sila, after being duly initiated." HBV 5.450

tatha skande sri brahma narada samvade caturmasya vrata salagrama silarca  
prasange

In the conversation between Lord Brahma and Narada Muni regarding the worship of salagrama sila in the connection with the caturmasya vow that is found in Skanda Purana, it is stated:

brahmana ksatriya visam sat  
sudranam athapi va  
salagrame'dhikaro'sti  
na canyesam kadacana

"Brahmanas, ksatriyas, and vaisyas are qualified to worship the salagrama sila. If a sudra is a devotee of Lord Hari then he is also qualified. Otherwise, he is not. (A brahmana who is not a devotee of Lord Visnu is not qualified to worship the salagrama sila but the sudra who is attached to the devotional service of Lord Hari is qualified to worship the salagrama sila. The word sat sudra in this verse refers to a sudra who is inclined to the devotional service of Lord Hari.) HBV 5.451

tatraivanyatra (Elsewhere in the same Purana it is stated)

striyo va yadi va sudra  
brahmanah ksatriyadayah  
pujayitva sila cakram  
labhante sasvatam padam

"It does not matter whether one is a woman, sudra, brahmana or ksatriya, anyone

who worships the salagrama sila attains the eternal abode of the Supreme Lord."  
HBV 5.452

ato nisedhakam yad yad  
vacanam srutyate sphutam  
avaishnava param tat tad  
vijneyam tattva dirsibhih

"According to those who are knowers of the truth, the statements prohibiting the worship of the salagrama sila by sudras and women that are found in scriptures are applicable only to those who are not devotees of Lord Visnu."  
HBV 5.453

This last verse is put together with an example of the sastric statements which do not apply to devotees of Lord Visnu as follows:

ato nisedhakam yad yad  
vacanam srutyate sphutam  
avaishnava param tat tad  
vijneyam tattva dirsibhih

brahmanasyaiva pujoya'ham  
sucer apy asucer api  
stri-sudrakara samsparso  
vajrad api suduh saha

pranava uccaranac caiva  
salagrama silarcanat  
brahmani gamanac caiva  
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"According to those who are knowers of the truth, the statements prohibiting the worship of the salagrama sila by sudras and women that are found in scriptures are applicable only to those who are not devotees of Lord Visnu." An example of a prohibitory injunction is "Whether pure or impure, ONLY (those born) Brahmanas are qualified to worship Me. I feel the touch of a (person born) Sudra or a woman to be more painful than a thunderbolt. If they utter the sacred syllable Om (Omkaara/pranava), worship Salagrama Sila, or have sex with a Brahmana woman, they become dog-eaters." HBV 5.453-455  
These verses are presented in serial order, as presented in the sam.hita..

pra.ptum icchan para.m. siddhim. janah. sarvo 'py akincanah. | s.raddhaya.  
paraya. yukto harim. [s.aran.am](#) a.s.rayet ||13||

"One who desires to achieve ultimate benefit (para. siddhi) and who is without desire for proprietorship (akincana) must take shelter of Lord Hari with transcendental faith."

[We agree]

na ja.ti-bhedam. na kulam. na lin.gam. na gun.a-kriya.h. | na des.a-ka.lau  
na.vastha.m. yogo hy ayam apeks.ate ||14||

"There is no consideration of birth, family, gender, or quality, work, etc., nor is there consideration of time, place, and circumstance in accepting this yoga process (pa.ncara.triki. vidhi)."

[We agree]

brahma-ks.atra-vis.ah. s.u.dra.h. striya.s. ca.ntaraja.s tatha. | sarva eva  
prapadyeran sarva-dha.ta.ram acyutam ||15||

"Anyone, whether they be [bra.hman.as](#), ks.atriyas, vais.yas, s.u.drass, women, antyajass, or anyone else, should, with full faith, take shelter of Lord Acyuta, who is the master of all living entities, through the medium of this yoga."

[We agree. N.B. Only in the Gaudiya Math, ISKCON and the Vajrasucika Upanisad are brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas, sudras, women and antya-jas clearly defined by qualifications and not birth.



The word antya-ja contains the word ja which stands for janma or birth. It means literally "inferior birth" In the translation the word antya-ja is mentioned. Antya-ja in Monier Williams Sanskrit dictionary (the standard dictionary used by Srila Prabhupada and the BBT) as "of the lowest caste, a Sudra, a man of one of seven inferior tribes (a washerman, currier, mimic, Varuda, fisherman, Meda or attendant on women, and mountaineer or forester).

**Further definition of Varuda is "of a low mixed caste (one of the 7 low castes called Antya-ja, whose occupation is splitting canes) and the feminine version Varudi is a woman of the above caste. Further the word Meda is defined as "a particular mixed caste (the son of a Vaideha and a Karavara or a Nishada female according to some, any person who lives by degrading occupations). Vaidehas are defined as "a particular mixed caste, the son of a Sudra by a Vaisya or of a Vaisya by a Brahman woman. Further a Karavara is defined as "a man of a mixed and low caste (born from a Nishada father and Vaidehi mother, working in leather and hides.**

So wherever we see the word Antya-ja it refers to a person of lower birth (antya or inferior, ja or janma/birth). So it does not indicate a person who is judged according to his guna and karma but by his birth. All the classes in this sloka including brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas, sudras, women, antya-jas are being defined by their birth only and not by their gunas and karmas or qualifications.

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That is not the definition given in Manu Samhita or other Dharma Sastras and is also not the definition given here in Bharadvaja Samhita as seen by the use of the word Antya-ja which contains the word ja or janma i.e birth. This will become more important in the next slokas.]

prapitsur mantra-niratam. pra.jnam. hita-param. s.ucim | pras.a.ntam. niyatam.  
**vr.ttau bhajed dvija-varam. gurum ||38||**

"Thus, one who is desirous of surrendering with faith, should take shelter of a guru who is always engaged in chanting the mantra and is a knower of bhakti-siddha.nta (pra.jnam), is always engaged, without any desire for personal benefit, in showering mercy on fallen souls (hita-param), who is always pure in heart or free of sins, peaceful, and always committed to his prescribed duties (ordained by his guru or by varn.a.s.rama). Such a guru **should be the best of the twice-born (dvija-varam meaning bra.hman.a).**"

[Again the words dvija-varam here mean best of those who have taken second birth or upanayanam samskara which is ONLY offered in Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama or in Dharma Sastras to those males born in the families of brahmanas, ksatriyas and vaisyas.

It does not refer to those who have been elevated to the level of Vaisnavas by Vaisnava Mantra Diksha. Such persons may be considered by Gaudiya Math and ISKCON as exactly equal to those born in Brahmana families but outside of Gaudiya Math and ISKCON this is considered as a theoretical equivalence and not a practical one.

Being elevated by Vaisnava initiation does not entitle any woman or sudra or antya-ja male from taking upanayanam or savitri gayatri initiation according to these verses. So this idea should not be superimposed on the sastra Bharadvaja Samhita.

This verse clearly means that ONLY those who are actual born dvijas i.e. males born in brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya families and having their second birth by upanayanam or gayatri initiation may be a guru.

Conversely it also means that this verse not only excludes women but also males born in sudra or antya-ja families from being gurus. Please ask any Sri Vaisnava if this is the understanding. However the translators seem to conveniently forget that in explaining that women cannot be gurus the Bharadvaja Samhita also bans males born in sudra or antyaja families also.]

sapta-pu.rus.a-vijneye santataika.nti-nirmale |  
**kule ja.to gun.air yukto vipro s.res.t.hatamo guruh. ||39||**

**"The best guru of all is a learned bra.hman.a endowed with good qualities who**

has taken birth in a sinless lineage of devotee ancestors, traceable up to seven generations.”

[Here this sloka explains that the best guru is born in a pure family. This is quite in context of the above sloka being about the qualification of a guru as being a male born in a higher class family i.e. brahmana, ksatriya or vaisya.]

svayam. va. bhakti-sampanno jna.na.vaira.gya.bhu.s.itah. | sva-karma-nirato  
nityam arhaty a.ca.ryata.m. dvijah. ||40||

“Even if a twice-born bra.hman.a (dvija) happens to have some non-devotees in his family line, or has not been fortunate to take birth in a renowned family of pure devotees, he nevertheless always deserves to be an a.ca.rya if he is endowed with all good qualities like knowledge and renunciation, is engaged in his prescribed duties (sva-karma), and is steeped in loving devotion to the Lord.”

[We agree. A divja as defined in the above slokas as a male born in the families Brahmana, Ksatriya or Vaisya, has some non-Vaisnavas in his family or has not taken birth in a family of pure Vaisnavas i.e. only of ordinary brahmanas, ksatriyas or vaisyas. Still he can be a guru. This sloka in context here does not mean that a male who is not a dvija by birth can be a guru.]

na.ca.ryah. [kula-ja.to](#) 'pi jna.na-bhakty-a.di-varjitah. | na ca  
hi.na-vayo-ja.tih. prakr.s.t.a.na.m ana.padi ||41||

“On the other hand, one cannot become an a.ca.rya even if one is born in a great family line (as mentioned before) but is devoid of [jna.na](#), bhakti, good qualities, etc. Also, unless there is an emergency, an a.ca.rya from a lower birth or age should not initiate a person from a higher birth or age.”

[Two points are made in this sloka. First even if one is born in a great family line and is a male dvija, if he does not have jnana, bhakti, good qualities, etc. he cannot be guru. Thus he needs to be born male in a dvija family AND ALSO he needs jnana, bhakti, and good qualities. It does not say that he can substitute jnana, bhakti and good qualities for being born a male in a dvija family.

Secondly amongst male dvijas, those males born in the families of brahmanas, ksatriyas and vaisyas, should not initiate persons older than themselves nor those born in a higher class than themselves.]

na ja.tu mantra-da. na.ri. na s.u.dro na.ntarodbhavah. | na.bhis.asto na  
patitah. [ka.ma-ka.mo](#) 'py aka.minah. ||42||

“Even then, a woman, a s.u.dra and an antyajaja can never act as initiating gurus, nor can anyone who is accused of a great sin or is fallen. And an aspiring disciple who is already accomplished in detachment (aka.mi.) should never accept a guru who is infected with material desires.”

[This is completely contradicted by Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhus statement in Caitanya Caritamrta Madhya Lila 8.128:

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya  
yei krsna-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya

“Whether one is a brahmana, a sannyasi or a sudra—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Krsna.”

Therefore for Gaudiya Sampradaya and ISKCON this order of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the teachings of Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis (as quoted above) supercede the caste-by-birth rules of Caste-by-Birth Asura Varnashrama as mentioned in Bharadvaja Samhita and Manu Samhita. (Some other Vaisnavas and Sampradayas may wish not to follow Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis and to follow Bharadvaja Samhita and Manu Samhita more strictly but clearly Gaudiya Vaisnavas and specifically ISKCON can not.)]

striyah. s.u.dra.dayas. caiva bodhayeyur hita.hitam | yatha.rham. ma.nani.ya.s.  
ca na.rhanty a.ca.ryata.m. kvacit ||43||

“Women, s.u.drās, etc., can give ethical and moral instructions and are also worthy of respect as per their qualifications and conditions but are not entitled to get the position of a.ca.rya.”

[We disagree. We accept the teachings of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis on this matter that supercede the caste-by-birth Asura Varnashrama rules presented in Bharadvaja Samhita and Manu Samhita. For details see above.]

kim apy atra.bhija.yante yoginah. sarva-yonis.u | pratyaks.ita.tma-na.tha.na.m.  
**nais.a.m. cintyam. kula.dikam ||44||**

"But, because perfect yogis (or nitya-siddha devotees) who are on the stage of yoga-pratyaks.a (i.e. are self- realized – seeing God face-to-face), **pratyaks.ita.tma-na.tha.na.m, may take birth in any family tradition, in such cases no consideration of kula, gender, etc. as mentioned earlier apply (they can become a.ca.ryas).**"

[Every person who knows the science of Lord Krsna, yei krsna tattva vetta sei guru hoy, knows that Lord Krsna appears in His non-different deity form in the temple and homes of all Vaisnava Sampradayas. Anyone with this knowledge can and does see the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His Arca Avatar form "face to face" each time they have darshan of the deities in these places. The idea given in this sloka is that someone should understand the Vaisnava philosophical doctrines fully which is exactly the same as Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada and the Vrndavan Goswamis insistence on a person being yei krsna tattva vetta sei guru hoy. Thus we agree that a person who knows such transcendental knowledge thus sees the deity in the temple as non-different from God Himself. This is in contrast to someone who sees the deity in the temple simply as a statue or ordinary stone. Those who think otherwise have a hellish mentality.

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above in the Padma Purana, he has a hellish mentality. This evil hellish mentality must not be allowed to enter ISKCON.]

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**Mahatma Das**  
<mahat@aol.com>

Sun, Feb 17, 2019 at 12:56 PM

To: brss108@gmail.com  
Cc: nrsimhananda@gmail.com,  
Atmanivedana.swami@pamho.net, BDDS.BTS@pamho.net,  
Drutakarma.acbsp@pamho.net, Kratudas108@yahoo.com,  
Mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net, ajitacozzi@gmail.com,  
askindredspirits@gmail.com, bbks108@gmail.com,  
bobcohen@ivs.edu, brss108@gmail.com,  
carlwoodham@gmail.com, chandraswami108@hotmail.com,  
damodara.bvks@gmail.com, dasivisakha@gmail.com,  
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vrnda16@icloud.com

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Let us welcome Krishna East into the mix!

And probably we'll need Krishna Mid West and Mid East for the more conservative liberals and more liberal conservatives.

I think a big problem is when leadership ascertains that something must be exactly this way when in reality it is not, or in reality not all leaders agree. This can cause younger to become confused or even judge seniors who seem to differ from established policies or doctrines (some of which change over time). I saw very young devotees commit horrible offences to exalted devotees outside of Iskcon when our leaders or GBC criticized them. We certainly want to avoid this.

In a message dated 2/16/2019 4:06:47 PM India Standard Time, [brss108@gmail.com](mailto:brss108@gmail.com) writes:

I will be very honored to help in any way I can with this noble effort. This is indeed the key issue which would solve unlimited problems for ISKCON.

I thought that if we can diversify our activities and fields, while keeping respect towards each other, this could solve it. No need to philosophically fight over any issues, because Krishna as Time factor will show who understands Him and Srila Prabhupada better. And we know that good neighbors are living behind the tall fences. This could be the way to “agree to disagree”. And it will not be another schism,

because in many religious organizations there are different orders. We only need to recognize it and keep them apart. Like a bird has a body and two wings, we could have Traditional ISKCON, Moderate ISKCON and Innovative ISKCON. Everyone could choose then where they want to belong. Maybe even including our GBC's, Sannyasis and Gurus?

I can see that it's already happening, and will surely be happening even more, then why not to make it official?

Your servant, B.R. Sagar Swami

On 16 Feb 2019, at 09:58, Mahatma Das <[mahat@aol.com](mailto:mahat@aol.com)> wrote:

I would need help with this and I think it is broader than what i presented in this letter. Sagar Maharaj also mentioned the importance of dealing with this topic so I am sure he will want to help. If any others are interested in helping, or have ideas on how to make iskon more encompassing, perhaps recognizing various orders within and on the periphery of the movement, let me know. If we don't try to for this, I think we are failing the next generation.

In a message dated 2/16/2019 8:05:40 AM India Standard Time, [nrsimhananda@gmail.com](mailto:nrsimhananda@gmail.com) writes:

Mahatma Pr- Can you come up with a proposal?

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